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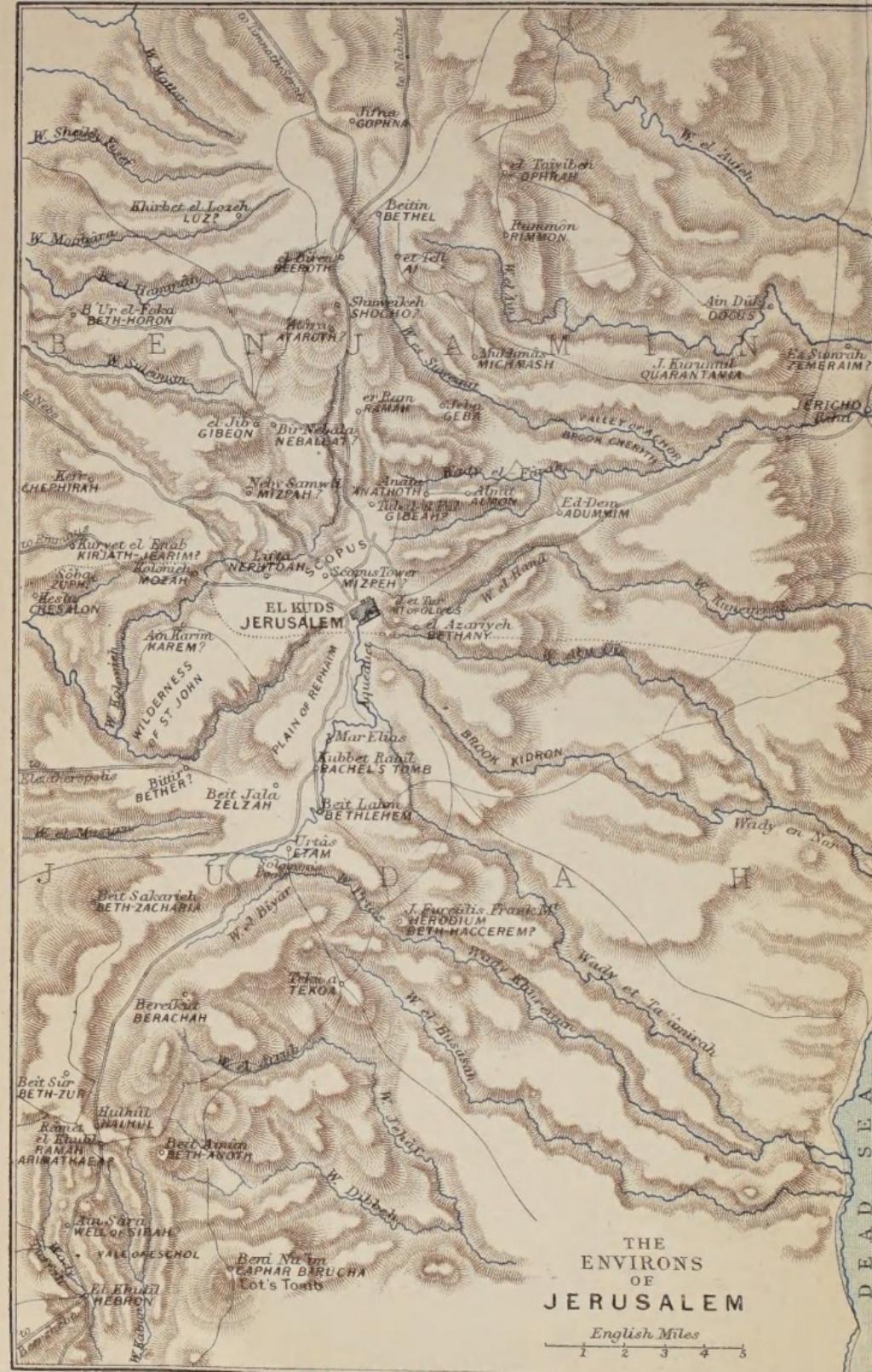
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# St. John

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## PREFACE

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THE nature of this Work is best explained by calling it a "Reprint of the Notes on St. John's Gospel in Bishop Ellicott's COMMENTARY FOR ENGLISH READERS;" but it is somewhat, though not much, more than a reprint. In the larger Edition it was necessary to save space wherever possible by referring to earlier Notes in the same volume; in this Reprint it cannot be assumed that the reader will have the earlier Notes at hand, and therefore an attempt has been made, wherever it could be done by the addition of a few words, to make these Notes complete in themselves. There has been, however, no attempt to re-write them; and it must be borne in mind that they are Notes upon the Gospel according to St. John, and not upon the Four Gospels. There has been no important omission made; whatever change occurs is by way of addition, and the Work is essentially identical with the corresponding portion of the larger one. The whole has been carefully re-read, and opportunity has been taken to correct errors of the press which had crept into the earlier editions.

For the Index to the present Volume I am indebted to the kind care of my former colleague, Mr. E. F. Taylor, Fellow of St. Augustine's College.

H. W. WATKINS.



## INTRODUCTION

TO

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN

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- II. AUTHORSHIP OF THE GOSPEL (pp. 8-18).
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- V. CONTENTS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOSPEL (pp. 23-27).
- VI. SKETCH OF THE LITERATURE OF THE SUBJECT (pp. 27-29).

### I. Life of the Apostle John.

—Our sources of information for the life of the Apostle John are, (1) the Four Gospels themselves; (2) the Acts of the Apostles, with references in the Epistles; (3) the traditions which have come to us in the history of the early Church.

(1) From the Gospels we know that St. John was the son of Zebedee and Salome.

The father is mentioned only once in the narrative (Matt. iv. 21, 22; Mark i. 19, 20), but the name occurs frequently as distinguishing the sons. He had "hired servants" (Mark i. 20); and John's own connection with the family of the high priest (John xviii. 15), and the committal of Mary to his care (John xix. 27), may also point to a position removed at least from the necessity, but not from the practice, of labour, which was customary among Jews of all classes (Matt. iv. 21).

Of Salome we know little more. It has been assumed above that she was the wife of Zebedee, and the

mother of St. John; and the assumption is based upon a comparison of Matt. xx. 20; xxvii. 56; Mark xv. 40; xvi. 1. It has also been frequently assumed that she was the sister of Mary, the mother of our Lord, mentioned in John xix. 25; and although this cannot be regarded as proved, it is the most probable interpretation. It would follow from this that St. John was the cousin-german of our Lord.

Salome was also one of the band of women who ministered unto the Lord of their substance (Matt. xxvii. 56; Luke viii. 3); and this falls in with the general impression which the narrative gives of the position of the family. She was present at the Crucifixion (Mark xv. 40), and was one of those who brought spices for the embalmment (Mark xvi. 1). In one other passage she is mentioned, and there she appears as asking for her two sons the position of honour in the Messianic kingdom (Matt. xx. 20 *et seq.*). Her prominence as com-

pared with her husband, and the title "mother of Zebedee's children," makes it probable that she outlived him, and that the influence of the mother, whose zeal and love for her sons are illustrated in her ambitious request for them, was that which chiefly moulded the Apostle's earlier years.

Another member of the household is known to us—James, who is usually mentioned first, and was presumably the elder of the pair of brothers. At the time of his death he was, however, known to St. Luke as "James the brother of John" (Acts xii. 2), and the same writer inverts the order of the names in the same chapter (Luke ix. 28 [? reading], 52). In Acts i. 13, too, the better reading is *Peter and John and James*. The home of the family was on the shores of the Lake of Galilee, at Bethsaida, according to the usual conclusion from Luke v. 9 and John i. 44; or, perhaps, at Caper-naum, which was not far from Bethsaida (Mark i. 29).

The sons of Jonas were companions of the sons of Zebedee when they are first mentioned, and had probably been friends in boyhood and youth. Whether the home was at Bethsaida or Capernaum, the Apostle was by birth a Galilean, as were all the Twelve, with the exception, perhaps, of Judas Iscariot. (Comp. Notes on chap. vi. 71, and see Acts ii. 7). He belonged, then, to the free, industrious, and warlike people of the North, who were despised by the more cultured inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon whom the yoke of Judaism pressed less heavily than it did upon the dwellers in Judæa. Removed from the influence of scribes and Pharisees on the one

hand, he would on the other hand grow up in contact with men of alien races and creeds, who were found in large numbers in the populous cities of Galilee. The union of Jewish and Greek characteristics which mark the man would be thus formed insensibly in the boy.

We know too little of the family life in Galilee eighteen centuries ago to be able to realise with any fulness and certainty how the years of the Apostle's boyhood and youth were spent; and yet there are certain bold lines which can be distinctly traced. Up to the age of six he, like other Jewish children, would be taught by his parents at home, and then sent to one of the public schools, which, in the period after the Captivity, had been established in every town and important village in Judæa and Galilee. We know that after the fall of Jerusalem Tiberias became the seat of the most famous rabbinic school, and it is probable that there were already established on the shores of the sea of Galilee the seminaries of doctors who had been themselves trained at Jerusalem. The lad would have gone to one of these higher seminaries at the age of sixteen, and would thus have been fitted for the work which, in the providence of God, lay before him, though he was not technically trained at the feet of a rabbi, and was therefore classed among the "unlearned and ignorant" (Acts iv. 13).

At the age of twelve or thirteen, John would have been taken up, as we know that Jesus was, to keep the feasts at Jerusalem. The holy city, bound up with prophecy and psalm; the temple, the centre of every highest hope and thought

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which, at mother's knee or at the feet of the teacher, had been instilled into his mind, now burst in all the glory of its reality upon this Galilean boy. What Oxford and Cambridge are to English schoolboys, or Rome to the pilgrim from distant lands, all this, and a thousand times more than all this, was the city of Zion to the Jewish pilgrim. Well may it be that the gorgeous ritual of the temple so impressed itself upon the receptive youthful mind as to furnish the imagery in which the Visions of the Apocalypse were afterwards to be clothed.

These visits would be repeated three times each year, and form the great events in the year's course. The caravans, the pilgrim-songs, the discourses of rabbis and teachers, the ritual of the feasts themselves, would all leave their mark upon the opening mind, and lead to question and answer as to what these things meant.

In the intervals between the feasts, there would be the regular synagogue services and instructions, the converse with teachers and friends, the daily task in his father's trade, the growth and development of character in and through all these outer circumstances.

The most prominent thought of the times, the subject on which men were ever musing and speaking, was the expectation of the Messiah. Probably every well-trained Jewish boy expected that the Messiah would come before his own life would end. Together with this expectation of the Messiah there were hopes of freedom from the oppression of Rome; and the deep feeling of the masses frequently found vent in open in-

surrection. One remarkable attempt to throw off the hated yoke, which was for a time successful—when Judas the Gaulonite, and Sadoc the Pharisee, ruled the whole country—must have occurred when John was yet a boy, and his spirit must have been fired by the cry of their watchword, “God only is our Lord and Master.” (Comp. Jos. Ant. xviii. 1.)

And so the years went on. Boyhood passed into youth, and youth into manhood. The study of the law and the prophets, the singing of psalms, the utterance of prayers, the feelings and hopes of his countrymen, must, with successive years, have brought a new meaning. The dreams of childhood and visions of youth grew into the deeper thoughts and fuller hopes of manhood.

Such was the relation of John's mind to the preparation of the past and to the hopes of the future, when the Baptist appeared as the herald of the coming King, and passing from Judaea northwards through the Jordan Valley, cried with a voice which, like a trumpet-blast, awoke men from their spiritual slumber, “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Among those who flocked to this new teacher were the sons of Zebedee and the sons of Jonas. The first chapter of this Gospel leads to the thought that they were prominent among the Forerunner's disciples; and to the heart of no one, it may be, of all who heard him did his burning words come with greater power than to that of the young follower whose name was in the after-history to eclipse his own. For days, or weeks, or months, perhaps, the spirit of John the Baptist was leading the spirit

of John the son of Zebedee onward from Old Testament prophecy to Him in whom Old Testament prophecy was to be fulfilled. Neither knew, indeed, that the fulfilment was so near at hand until the Baptist saw the Messiah coming to be baptised, and the disciple heard the cry, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." On the following day the words so full of meaning were again spoken, and a pair of disciples, of whom Andrew was one, and John almost certainly the other, passed from the discipleship of the Baptist to that of the Messiah Himself. They "remained with Him that day," the crisis of the life, in which its whole current was changed. (See Notes on chap. i. 35—42.)

The next period of the life is one with which we are familiar from the Gospels themselves, and one which, therefore, needs but a brief treatment here. John seems at once to have followed Jesus; to have been present, and, perhaps, even to have been a central figure, at the marriage at Cana (chap. ii., Note on verse 5); to have gone thence with Him to Capernaum and Jerusalem (chap. ii. 12, 22); to have been with Him on the return to Samaria; and then probably for a time to have gone back to his ordinary life, learning in the calmness of its retirement the meaning of the lessons which the words and deeds of Jesus had taught him.

From that retirement he is again called, and perhaps the call was repeated (comp. Matt. iv. 18 and Luke v. 1—11), to be a fisher of men and an Apostle of the Church of Christ. With James his brother, with Simon and Andrew his friends, he is always named in

the first group of the Apostles; and with James and Simon he forms the band of three who are the nearest friends and companions of the earthly life of Christ. They alone are with Him in the presence of death (Mark v. 37); in the Mount of Transfiguration; in the garden of Gethsemane. Peter and John follow Him within the high priest's house at the trial (chap. xviii.); John at least was present at the Crucifixion; and both ran together to the sepulchre. From the call to the Apostleship to the close of the human life of Christ, the story of the life of St. John is bound up with the outer events of the life of his Master. Following in His steps; hearing, and, with greater receptive power than any other hearer, grasping the truths that Christ taught; seeing, and, with greater spiritual intuition than any other witness, reading the signs that Christ did; loving with fuller love, and therefore more fully loved; he was preparing to be prominent among witnesses to, as he had been prominent among those who were witnesses of, the works and teaching and love of Christ.

But his character is not represented as simply receptive. He who gave to Simon the name of Peter to mark him out as the rockman of the Church, gave to James and John, as marking out some characteristics in them, the title "Boanerges" or "Thundersons." (Comp. Mark iii. 17.) If "Son of Perdition" was the name of him in whom there was the special characteristic marked by "perdition" (comp. chap. xvii. 12), and "Son of Exhortation" that of him who had this special gift (comp. Acts iv. 36), then

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"Sons of Thunder" marks out some force of character — sudden, impulsive, vehement, as the thunder's roll. Of this we find traces in the earlier Gospels. These sons of Zebedee, seeking with their mother the chief places in the Messianic kingdom, declare that they are ready to face all the dangers and difficulties before them; to drink of His cup; to be baptised with His baptism (Matt. xx. 20—24; Mark x. 35—41). They forbade those who cast out devils in Christ's name, and would call fire from heaven to consume those who received not their Lord (Luke ix. 49—54). Of the spirit of the Elijah of the Old Testament they had learnt in the school of the Elijah of the New Testament, and had carried, perhaps, something of the Baptist's stern denunciation of sin, and of his hardness of life and manner, into the work of Christ.

But if this is the character of John as drawn in the earlier Gospels, it is not that which is drawn in the Fourth Gospel itself. There he is the son of love, gentleness, receptivity, rather than the son of thunder; and these are the aspects of his character which have for the most part impressed themselves on Christian art and thought. The difference has often been noted, and for the most part noted by those who have drawn from it the inference that the two pictures cannot represent the same man, and that the later is the ideal of an after age. But the picture of the natural man taken in the fire and vigour of youth may furnish but few points of resemblance with that which represents him in the mellow ripeness of age. Great minds are wholly changed by half a century of expansion and growth; and

experience would seem to show that the earnest, forceful, impulsive character is that which ripens into calm and gentle love. If the youth represents love bursting forth in active strength, the old age represents love passively resting in being loved. The pictures, it should be remembered also, are drawn from different stand-points. The former is from without, representing the character in youth, as seen in its manifestations by others; the latter is from within, representing the character at the close of life, as the writer knew himself, and knew himself to be receptive of the love of Christ.

(2) For the next period of the life of St. John our only authorities are the Acts of the Apostles and their letters. Here, as in the Gospels, he is closely connected with St. Peter. They are named together among those who were "in the upper room" (chap. i. 13); they go up to the Temple together (chap. iii. 1), and are together before the Sanhedrin (chap. iv. 13, 19); they are sent together on the mission to Samaria (chap. viii. 14). Both are in Jerusalem after the Herodian persecution, in which James was killed with the sword (chap. xii. 2), and are at the first great council (chap. xv. 6; comp. Gal. ii. 9). These scanty notices give all that we know of a period which must have extended over some twenty years. While James was the first bishop of the Jerusalem Church, and Peter was the leader of Christianity among the Jews, it can hardly be that St. John was living a life of retirement. Other missions, like that to the Samaritans, may in part have occupied this interval; or he may have carried on a work less promi-

nent, but not less useful, than that of St. Peter and St. James in Jerusalem itself; or he may have returned to Galilee to do a like work there. Wherever he dwelt, he doubtless regarded the solemn committal of the Virgin Mary to his care (chap. xix. 26) as binding while she lived. If we may accept the traditions which place her death in the year A.D. 48 as approximately true, it may account for the fact that St. John is not mentioned with St. Peter and St. James as in Jerusalem during St. Paul's first visit after his conversion, about A.D. 38 (Gal. i. 18, 19); but he is so mentioned, and is regarded as one of the "pillars of the Church," at the visit to the council in A.D. 51 (Gal. ii. 9).

In connection with this residence at Jerusalem, extending, it may be, over many years, we have to bear in mind that while Galilee is the scene of the narrative of the earlier Gospels, Jerusalem is specially that of the Fourth. It assumes a minute acquaintance with persons and places which could be possessed only by one who had resided in the city. (Comp. p. 12 (b).)

(3) Passing to the later period of the Apostolic life, we are left without any certain guide. He is nowhere mentioned in the New Testament after the Jerusalem council in A.D. 51. It would seem probable that he was not there during St. Paul's visit of Acts xxi., but the argument from silence ought never to be pressed, nor should it be forgotten that St. Luke records the visit only in so far as it concerned St. Paul. We may with greater reason infer that he was not at Ephesus when St. Paul bade farewell to the elders of that city (Acts xx.), nor yet when he

wrote the Ephesian Epistle and the later Pastoral Letters. It may be, indeed, that he had left Jerusalem, but had not yet arrived at Ephesus. A work of which we have no record is suggested by some MSS. of the First Epistle, which assert that it was written to the Parthians, and a tradition of such work seems to have been known to Augustine. It is, however, more probable that the Apostle continued in Jerusalem until the destruction of the city, and that he was then borne on the westward-flowing current of Christianity to the city of Ephesus, which from the middle of the first to the middle of the second century, was its most important centre. (Comp. § III. p. 18.)

Ephesus was the link between the east and the west, between the mystic philosophies of Asia and the schools of Greece. More than any other city it had a charm for St. Paul, who had preached in it and the surrounding towns during three years, and had planted there Churches, which he saw flourish under his care, but in the midst of which he saw also seeds of future error. (See Acts xiv., xx. 29, 30.)

From the Book of Revelation we may infer that, in addition to Ephesus, the surrounding Churches of Smyrna, and Pergamos, and Thyatira, and Sardis, and Philadelphia, and Laodicea were the special objects of the Apostle's care, and that in one of the persecutions which fell upon the early Church he was banished to the island of Patmos. Returning from Patmos to Ephesus after the accession of Nerva, if we may accept the early tradition, he continued there to an extreme old age, combating heresies and teaching the truth.

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The old age of St. John became the centre of legends, partly based upon fact, and partly ideal, which the early Christians loved to tell, and many of which have come down to our own day. They thought of his life as charmed, so that poison could not affect it, nor any form of death destroy it; they told—and it was not, Clement of Alexandria says, a story, but a true account—how the old man pursued a lost convert, whom he had committed to the charge of a bishop in Asia Minor, and regained him in the robber's den; how, like the Jewish high priest, he wore upon his head the plate of gold inscribed with “Holiness to the Lord;” how he, with something of the spirit of earlier days, flew from the bath in which the heretic Cerinthus was, lest it should fall upon him; how he was borne into the church when all power to move was gone, and, as if echoing the farewell words of Christ, which he himself had heard, said, “Little children, love one another, little children, love one another;” and how, when asked why he always said this one thing, the old man replied, “Because this is the Lord's command, and if this is done, all is done.”

Cassian (*Collat. xxiv. c. 2*) relates an anecdote, which may be given as an illustration of the impression of the Asiatic Church with regard to the character of the Apostle. “The blessed Evangelist was one day gently stroking a partridge, when a young man, returning from hunting, asked in astonishment how a man so illustrious could spend his time in such a manner? ‘What have you got in your hand?’ replied the Apostle. ‘A bow,’ said the young man. ‘Why is it not

strung?’ ‘Because if I carried it strung always it would lose the elasticity which I shall want in it when I draw the arrow.’ ‘Do not be angry, then, my young friend, if I sometimes in this way unstring my spirit, which may otherwise lose its spring, and fail at the very moment when I shall need its power.’”

But space would fail to enter on a field so tempting and so full of beauty as the traditional history of the old age of St. John. Uncertain as we have found the history to be, we cannot expect to have any exact knowledge of the time of his death. Irenæus speaks of him as alive after the accession of Trajan (A.D. 98); Jerome places the death at sixty-eight years after the Crucifixion. He lived, then, until near the close of the first century, or, it may be, that he lived on into the second century; and if we accept the tradition that he was some years younger than our Lord, we have to think of him—the martyr in will, but not in deed—as sinking peacefully to the grave, beneath the weight of more than fourscore years and ten.

[For the matter of this section, comp. Godet, *Introduction, Historique et Critique*, 1876, pp. 35—75 (translated in Clark's Library); Lücke, *Commentar*, 1840, vol. i., pp. 6—40; Neander, *Planting of Christianity* (Bohn's Library); Stanley, *Sermons and Essays on the Apostolic Age*; Macdonald, *Life and Writings of St. John*, 1876; Trench (Francis), *Life and Character of St. John*, 1850; Plumptre, Article “John the Apostle,” in *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. i., pp. 1103 *et seq.*; Archbishop Tait, “St. John's Connection with Christian History and Evidence,”—Good

## ST. JOHN.

Words, July, 1868 ; Miss Yonge,  
*The Pupils of St. John the Divine.]*

**II. Authorship of the Gospel.**—The evidence for the authorship of any writing consists of two distinct branches, of which one (1) traces the external history of the writing, and the other (2) is based upon the contents of the writing itself.

(1) The writing which everybody now understands by "The Gospel according to St. John" has borne this title through the whole history of the Church, and during by far the greater part of that history has borne it without question. From the last quarter of the second century to the last quarter of the eighteenth century the writing was received with almost one consent, as the authentic witness of the Apostle John; but this period of clear and unbroken reception was preceded by one of twilight, in which it is difficult to trace the lines of evidence, and has been followed by one of destructive criticism, extending to our own day. It is believed that to every new investigator who unites competence with candour, the light of the second century becomes more and more clear in the evidence it supplies of the reception of the Gospel as St. John's; and that the chief result of the criticism which would destroy, has been to bring out a criticism of defence which has made the external evidence of the Johannine authorship more conclusive than it has ever been before.

The evidence adduced for the reception of the Gospel as by St. John, at the close of the second century, comes from every quarter of the Church. Irenæus at Lyons, himself a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of St.

John ; Tertullian at Carthage, writing against the heretic Marcion ; Clement at Alexandria ; the Muratorian Fragment at Rome ; the Peshito version from Syria ; the Old Latin from Africa — all are witnesses speaking with a voice the meaning of which cannot be doubted, and the authority of which cannot be impeached.

Following the line of evidence backwards through the earlier decades of the century, we meet with a fragmentary literature ; and the value of the evidence depends upon considerations such as how far we have a rational ground to expect that in Apologies, Letters, Homilies, Apocalyptic Visions, there would be references to a writing like the Fourth Gospel ; how far such references are actually found ; how far the literary habits of the age justify us in saying that a reference is or is not a quotation ; how far it is likely that a Gospel which is confessedly much later than the others, and was possibly for years known only to a limited circle, should, in comparison with these, have influenced the scanty literature of the next age.

To discuss this question is, obviously, far beyond the limits of the present sketch, and requires an acquaintance with languages and a literature, which can hardly be within the reach of those for whom the present pages are meant. The result to which the opinions of the most competent scholars seems to be tending is, that we have in the literature of the earlier part of the second century fully as much reference to the Fourth Gospel as we could reasonably expect it to furnish ; and that a full and fair examination of that litera-

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ture, even as it has come down to us, must pronounce it to be in support of the Johannine authorship. Upon this point, those of us who are ordinary readers must be content to accept the witness of experts; and there are few students of English Divinity who will doubt that the writer of the following words speaks with an authority shared by no living author.

"If the same amount of written matter — occupying a very few pages in all — were extracted accidentally from the current theological literature of our day, the chance, unless I am mistaken, would be strongly against our finding so many indications of the use of this Gospel. In every one of the writers, from Polycarp and Papias to Polycrates, we have observed phenomena which bear witness, directly or indirectly, and with different degrees of distinctness, to its recognition. It is quite possible for critical ingenuity to find a reason for discrediting each instance in turn. An objector may urge in one case that the writing itself is a forgery; in a second that the particular passage is an interpolation; in a third, that the supposed quotation is the original, and the language of the Evangelist the copy; in a fourth, that the incident or saying was not deduced from this Gospel, but from some apocryphal work containing a parallel narrative. By a sufficient number of assumptions, which lie beyond the range of verification, the evidence may be set aside. But the early existence and recognition of the Fourth Gospel is the one simple postulate which explains all the facts. The law of gravitation accounts for the various phenomena of motion, the

falling of a stone, the jet of a fountain, the orbits of the planets, and so forth. It is quite possible for any one who is so disposed to reject this explanation of nature. Provided that he is allowed to postulate a new force for every new fact with which he is confronted, he has nothing to fear. He will then —

‘Gird the sphere  
With centric and eccentric scribbled o'er  
Cycle and epicycle, orb in orb,'

happy in his immunity. But the other theory will prevail, nevertheless, by reason of its simplicity." (Prof. Lightfoot, in *Contemporary Review*, Feb., 1876.)

Important as these results of modern scholarship are, the results attained by the greatest thinkers and scholars at the close of the second century itself are of still greater importance. We have seen above that there was a general consensus of independent testimony to the acceptance of the Gospel by St. John. The evidential value of this fact cannot be over-estimated. Men like Irenæus, and Tertullian, and Clement, were neither morally dishonest nor intellectually incapable. They had to deal, moreover, with opponents who would quickly have exposed deceit and detected error. They and their opponents were intellectually, as well as physically, the children of the second century; their own lives went back far into it; they were removed by one generation only from the probable date of St. John's death; they had means of inquiry which we have not, and evidence upon which to base their judgment which has been for the most part lost; and it is scarcely too much to say that, had it been wholly lost, the convictions based upon this

evidence would have remained irresistible. The evidence of the Versions is of the same nature, showing that the translators accepted this Gospel as an undoubted portion of the sacred canon. We find that the moment the historic mists which hang over the second century pass away, the reception of the Gospel stands out in the clear light as an undoubted fact. The light did not create this reception, but made visible that which was there before.

The Gospel continued to be received, not without here and there an objection, but without any of historic importance, until the close of the eighteenth century, when Edward Evanson published *The Dissonance of the Four generally received Evangelists, and the Evidence of their Authenticity Examined* (Ipswich, 1792, 8vo). The object was to show that the Fourth Gospel was from a Platonist of the second century. Evanson was answered in the following year by Dr. Priestley and David Simpson, and for a time the scene of the controversy was shifted from English ground. The seed sown took root on the Continent, where it brought forth a host of smaller works, and notably the *Von Gottes Sohn der Welt Heiland* of Herder (Riga, 1797), in which the author seeks to show that St. John described an ideal, not an historic Christ. The well-known *Introductions* of Hug (1st ed., 1808) and Eichorn (1st ed., 1810) seem to have produced a strong reaction, and during the next decade the older opinion was again triumphant in Germany. In 1820 there appeared at Leipzig Bretschneider's famous *Probabilia*, in which he endeavoured to show the inconsis-

encies between the Fourth Gospel and the earlier three, and to prove that the writer was not an eyewitness, nor a native of Palestine, nor a Jew, and therefore not St. John. The work was more thorough than any of its precursors, and sent a shock through the whole theological world. There were, of course, many replies, and in the following year Bretschneider himself seems to have departed from his positions, and stated that his object was to promote the truth by discussing the subject. Once again came the reaction; and now, indeed, German thought, led by Schleiermacher, and sending forth Lücke's *Commentary* (1st ed., 1820; 2nd ed., 1833; 3rd ed., first part, 1840), which is still a classical work on the subject, was in danger of the other extreme of exalting the Fourth Gospel at the expense of the earlier three. This school maintained its ascendancy until 1835, when another shock was sent through Europe by the "Life of Jesus" of David Friedrich Strauss (*Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet*, Tübingen, 1835 — 6). The position of Strauss himself with regard to the Fourth Gospel was simply negative. He denied that the Gospel was by St. John, but did not venture upon the harder task of finding another author. But disciples are bolder than their master, and the Tübingen school did not long shrink from a positive hypothesis. Differing on other points, Baur, 1844, Zeller, 1845, and Schwegler, 1846, agreed that the Fourth Gospel belonged to the second half of the second century. Later investigations have again led to a reaction, and the Gospel is now confidently asserted to be the product of the first half

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of the century. To take but two representative names—Hilgenfeld (*Einleitung*, Leipzig, 1875) does not now doubt that the Gospel was written between A.D. 132 and 140, and Keim (*Jesu von Nazara*, 1875) would now, with equal confidence, give about A.D. 130 as its date. The last phase of the history again leads us to English ground, and must be fresh in the memory of English readers. The author of *Supernatural Religion* (London, 1st ed., 1874; 6th ed., 1875) could not pass over the question of the Fourth Gospel, and concluded that “there is the strongest reason for believing that it was not written by the son of Zebedee.” English scholars have been no longer able to look at the question from without; it has been brought home to them, and has demanded an answer at their hands. That answer has been, and is being given, and the apparent result is that to the author of no English work published during the present generation will the seekers of truth have more cause to be thankful than to the anonymous author of *Supernatural Religion*, who has led to inquiry upon this subject.

(2) Passing to the writing itself, we have to ask what answer the Fourth Gospel gives to the honest inquirer about its authorship. The inquiry is a wide one, and depends upon the careful study of the whole Gospel. Many points in the inquiry are indicated in this Commentary, and others will suggest themselves to the attentive reader. This section can only hope to point out the method in which he should pursue the inquiry. (Comp. especially Sanday's *Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, chap. xix.)

The chief centres round which modern criticism has grouped her questions respecting the internal evidence, are the following:—

(a) *Was the author a Jew?*—The line between the Hebrew and Greek languages—between Hebrew and Gentile modes of thought—is so definitely and clearly drawn that there ought to be to this question an undoubted answer. The Gospel deals with the ministry of our Lord among the Jews, and it ought not to be difficult to say with an approach to certainty, whether or not the many Jewish questions which necessarily arise are treated as a Jew naturally would treat them, and as no one but a Jew possibly could treat them. This, like every question related to the authorship of the Fourth Gospel, has met with answers diametrically opposed to each other; and yet the evidence for an affirmative answer seems irresistible.

1. The evidence of style can carry no weight with one unacquainted with the Hebrew and Greek languages, but the best Hebraists do not doubt that the style of the Fourth Gospel, while much more Greek than that of the Apocalypse, is still essentially Hebrew. Even Keim admits this (*Jesu von Nazara*, vol. i. p. 116); and Ewald regards it as beyond question that the writer is a “genuine Hebrew, who carries in himself the spirit of his mother tongue” (*Johanneischen Schriften*, vol. i. p. 44). (Comp., e.g., Notes on chaps. i. 3, 19, 38, 51, and xiii. 1.) It is not, however, simply that individual expressions are Hebraic, but that the Hebrew spirit comes out in the whole tone and structure of the writing.

2. Still more important than the evidence of style is that which

comes from the exact acquaintance with the current Hebrew thoughts, into which a Gentile could not possibly have thrown himself. (Comp., as a few instances out of many, the thoughts about the Messiah in chaps. i. 19—28; iv. 25; vi. 14, 15, *et al.*; about baptism, i. 25; iii. 22; iv. 2; about purification, ii. 6; iii. 25; xi. 55, *et al.*; about the Samaritans, iv. 9, 22; about the Sabbath, v. 1, *et seq.*; ix. 14, *et seq.*; about circumcision, vii. 22; about the notion that a Rabbi may not speak with a woman, iv. 27; about the Jew's manner of burying, xi. 44, and xix. 40.) These thoughts meet us in every chapter. They flow naturally from the Jewish mind, and could flow from no other.

3. Not less striking than the acquaintance with current Jewish ideas is the knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures. The Fourth Gospel is, in this respect, almost as Hebrew as the first. There can be no need to quote passages, but there are some of special interest because they show that the writer did not know the Old Testament through the Greek version (LXX.) only, but that he translated for his Greek readers from the original Hebrew text. (Comp. Notes on chaps. i. 29; xii. 13, 15, 38, and 40; xiii. 18; xix. 37.)

4. The prominence given to the Jewish feasts, and the way in which the writer makes them centres, and groups events and discourses around them, is one of the striking features of the Gospel. We have Passover (chaps. ii. 13, 23; vi. 4; xiii. 1; xviii. 28); Tabernacles (vii. 2); Dedication (x. 22); "A Feast of the Jews" (?) Purim, v. 1). The writer does not simply name these feasts, but

knows their history, and significance, and ritual. He is familiar with "the last day, the great day," of Tabernacles (vii. 37), and with the technical "Lesser Festival" (Note on vii. 14); with the fact that Dedication was in winter (x. 42); and with the "preparation" of the Passover (xix. 31).

(b) *Was the author a native of Palestine?*—Attention is frequently directed in the Notes to the minute knowledge of places. It will be sufficient here to refer to chaps. i. 28 (Bethany beyond Jordan), 44 (Bethsaida), 46 (Nazareth): ii. 1 (Cana); iii. 23 (Ænon); iv. 5\* (Sychar); v. 2 (Bethesda); viii. 20 (The Treasury); ix. 7 (Siloam); x. 23 (Solomon's Porch), 40 (Bethany, comp. i. 28); xi. 54 (Ephraim); xviii. 1 (Kedron), 15 (the high priest's palace); xix. 13 (Gabbatha), 17 (Golgotha); xx. 18 (Bethany near Jerusalem).

There is constantly some explanation added to a name. It is translated for Greek readers; or the moment it is mentioned some incident connected with it occurs to the writer's mind. Many of these examples show an exact acquaintance with the topography of Jerusalem, which must have been acquired before its destruction. The customs of the Temple are familiarly known (chap. ii. 13—17); and not less so are the haunts and habits of the fishermen on the

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\* The writer takes this opportunity of remarking that the suggestion made in the Note on this word in chap. iv. 5, that Askar=Æ-Sychar, has been already made by Prof. Lightfoot in the *Contemporary Review* for May, 1875. When the Note was being printed he sought, without success, for any confirmation of the suggestion, which probably arose from a latent remembrance of Prof. Lightfoot's article.

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Sea of Tiberias (chaps. vi. 17—21, 22—24; xxi. 6—11), or the synagogue at Capernaum (chap. vi. 17).

The argument from these details is cumulative, and, taken as a whole, must be acknowledged to be of very great weight. Let the reader carefully note the incidental way in which all this accuracy comes out, and he will feel that it is not acquired, and that the one simple explanation is that it belongs to a writer who was born and had lived among the places he is writing of, and now dwells upon them with loving memory.

(c) *Did the author live at the time of our Lord's ministry?* — The remarks upon Jerusalem immediately above have their bearing upon this question also, but that which is here specially important is to estimate the evidence which comes from the circle of thoughts in the midst of which the Gospel was written. How difficult it is at any period to realise the ideas of an earlier period every dramatist and writer of fiction knows. He may clothe his characters in the dress of their day, and surround them with the manners and customs of the past, but unless they are in a consummate master's hands they will think and speak in the present. The question then is, does the writer of the Fourth Gospel think and speak the thoughts and words of the first century or not? Now the fall of Jerusalem was a great gulf across which the ideas of the Jews about the Messiah could not pass. With it disappeared from the minds of that generation all hope for a temporal Messianic reign in Jerusalem. And yet this expectation runs like a thread through the whole texture of this Gospel. The inference is that the

writer grew up amidst this expectation—lived through the conflict between Jesus, who taught the spiritual nature of Messiah's kingdom, and the Jews, who could grasp only the temporal—and narrated at the close of the century that in which he himself had taken part, and which with him survived the destruction of Jerusalem.

Other instances of this knowledge of the thoughts of the period are of frequent occurrence. Comp., e.g., chaps. iv. 20, 21 (Jerusalem, the place of worship); vii. 1—13 (murmuring among the people about Jesus); ix. 8 (the neighbours' remark about the blind beggar); x. 19—21 (division among the Jews); xi. 47—53 (consultation of the Sanhedrin); chap. xix. (the various phases of thought during the trial).

(d) *Was the author an Apostle?* — The Fourth Gospel tells us more of what passed in the Apostolic circle than we can gather from the whole of the three earlier Gospels. The writer is as familiar with the thoughts, which were suggested at the time to the Apostles as he is with the thoughts of the Jews exemplified in the last section. Take, e.g., chap. ii. 20—22, where the writer records the saying of our Lord regarding the Temple, and how the disciples understood this after the resurrection. There are instances of the same kind of knowledge in chaps. iv. 27; vii. 39; xii. 6; xiii. 28, 29; xx. 9, 20; and the reader may without difficulty note others.

The minute knowledge of incidents in the relation between the Apostles and the Lord would seem to point exclusively to one of the Twelve as the writer. Comp. chaps. i. 38, 50 (Andrew, Simon, Philip, Nathaniel, and the unnamed

disciple); vi. 5—7 (the question to Philip), 8 (Andrew's remark), 68 (Peter's question), 70 (the explanatory remark about Judas); ix. 2 (the question about the man born blind); xi. 16 (the character of Thomas and the name Didymus, comp. xiv. 5; xx. 24, 28; xxi. 2); xii. 21, 22 (visit of the Greeks); xiii. (the Last Supper); xviii. 16 (the exact position of Peter and the other disciples and the portress); xx. 3—8 (the visit to the sepulchre).

The Notes point out in several instances the agreement between the character of Peter as drawn in the Fourth Gospel and that which is found in the Synoptists. More striking still, because inconceivable, except by one who drew it from the life, is the character of our Lord Himself. As we try and think out the writer's representation of the human life of Christ, we feel that we are being guided by one who is not picturing to us an ideal, but is declaring to us that which was from the beginning, which he had heard, which he had seen with his eyes, which he had looked upon, and his hands had handled of the Word of Life. (Comp. 1 John i. 3.)

(e) *Was the author an eye-witness?*—This question has in part been answered above; but it will add strength to the opinion which is probably fixing itself in the candid reader's mind if some of the instances of vivid picturing which Renan and others have noticed in this Gospel are collected here.

1. With regard to persons, all that has been said of individual Apostles applies. Add to them Nicodemus (chap. iii., Note); Martha and Mary (xi.); Malchus (xviii. 10); Annas, and Caiaphas, and

Pilate (xviii.); the women at the cross (xix. 25); the Magdalene (xxi. 1).

2. The indication of places and of feasts given above apply also in answer to this question.

3. The writer knows the days and the hours when events occurred. He was there, and is writing from memory, and knows that it was about the tenth (i. 39), or seventh (iv. 52), or sixth hour (iv. 6; xix. 14). (Comp. chaps. i. 29—35, 43; ii. 1, 13; iv. 40; xi. 6, 39; xii. 1).

4. We find running all through the Gospel an exactness of description, a representation of the whole scene photographed, as it were, upon the writer's memory, which is of greater weight than any number of individual quotations. Let any one read, e.g., chap. i. 38—51, or ii. 13—17, or xx. 8—10—and these are only instances chosen by way of illustration—and he will, as he thinks of them, see the whole picture before his mind's eye. The only explanation is, that the writer was what he claims to be—a witness whose record is true (chap. xix. 35). (Comp. chaps. i. 14, 16, and xxi. 24.) In this respect the Fourth Gospel reminds us of that by St. Mark.

(f) *Was the author one of the sons of Zebedee?*—Assuming that he was an eye-witness and an Apostle, we are sure that he was not Andrew, who is named in the Gospel four times, nor Peter (thirty - three times), nor Philip (twice), nor Nathanael (five times), nor Thomas (five times), nor Judas Iscariot (eight times), nor Judas, not Iscariot (once). Of the five other Apostles, Matthew is necessarily excluded, and James the son of Alphæus, and Simon the Canaanite

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occupy too unimportant a position in the Synoptic narrative to bring them within the limits of our hypothesis.

The sons of Zebedee remain. Now, what is the relation of the Fourth Gospel to them? While they are prominent among the members of the first Apostolic group in the Synoptists, and in the Acts of the Apostles, they are not even mentioned in this Gospel. In chap. i. 41 (see Note there), it is probable that both are referred to, but neither are named. In chap. xxi. 2, they are, on any interpretation, placed in an inferiority of order unknown to the earlier or later history, and are probably named last of those who were Apostles. This omission of names is not confined to the sons. It was so with the mother also. All we know of her comes from the earlier Gospels. We gather, indeed, from chap. xix. 25 that she was one of the women at the cross; but we have to turn to the parallel passages before we read of Salome or the mother of Zebedee's children.

Such are the facts; but if one of these brothers is the writer of this Gospel, then, and as far as we now know, thus only are the facts explained and the conditions met. But if the author was one of the sons of Zebedee, we can go a step further and assert that he was St. John, for St. James was a martyr in the Herodian persecution (Acts xii. 1; A.D. 44).

(g) *Was the author the "disciple whom Jesus loved?"*—(Chaps. xiii. 23; xix. 26; xx. 2; xxi. 7, 20. Comp. xviii. 15; xx. 2, 3, 4, 8.) The concluding words of the Gospel (chap. xxi. 24), as compared with verses 7 and 20, formally assert this identification. It may be

granted that these words are not those of the writer, but an attestation on the part of the Ephesian Church. Still they are part of the Gospel as it was first published, and are the words of one who claims to speak from personal knowledge.

But admitting that the writer was the disciple whom Jesus loved, then we have the key to what seems an impossible omission of the sons of Zebedee in this Gospel. The writer deliberately omits all mention of his own family, but his writing is the record of events in which he had himself taken part, and in this lies its value. His own personality cannot therefore be suppressed. He is present in all he writes, and yet the presence is felt, not seen. A veil rests over it—a name given to him, it may be, by his brethren, and cherished by him as the most honoured name that man could bear; but beneath the veil lives the person of John, the son of Zebedee and Salome, and the Apostle of the Lord.

We have now found in the Gospel answers to the questions which have been so often asked, and very variously answered, during the last half-century. If the answers are taken as but small parts of a great whole, and the Gospel itself is carefully read and studied, the evidence will in all its fulness be such as cannot be gainsaid. In the spirit of the striking words which we have quoted before (p. 9), it may be said that while here minute criticism thinks it may trace an error, or there some part of the evidence may be explained away—while various separate hypotheses may be invented to account for the various separate facts—the one postulate which accounts for the

whole of the phenomena, and does violence to none, is that the Fourth Gospel is the work of the Apostle whose name it bears.

Here the two lines of external and internal evidence meet, and if each points only with a high degree of probability, then both together must approximate to certainty.

The indirect line of argument may fairly be used as evidence which leads to the same results. The Fourth Gospel existed as a matter of fact, and was accepted as by St. John, in the last quarter of the second century. If it is asserted that the author was not St. John, we have a right to demand of the assertor that he should account for the fact of its existence, and for the fact of its reception at that time, as the work of the Apostle. This demand has never been met with evidence which would for a moment stand the test of examination.

From one point of view the arguments we have now followed will to most readers seem satisfactory; from another point of view they are painful enough. The fact must be apparent to all that many men have followed out these same arguments to a wholly different result. Among them are men of the highest intellectual culture, and with special knowledge of these special subjects; men whose ability no one has a right to question, and whose honesty no one has a right to impeach. And yet contradictory results cannot both be true. If Lightfoot and Westcott, Ewald and Luthardt are right, then Strauss and Baur, Keim and Hilgenfeld are wrong. Assertions like the following cannot be reconciled:—

“The elaborate explanations,

however, by which the phenomena of the Fourth Gospel are reconciled with the assumption that it was composed by the Apostle John are in vain, and there is not a single item of evidence within the first century and a half which does not agree with internal testimony in opposing the supposition.”\*

“We have seen that whilst there is not one particle of evidence during a century and a half after the events recorded in the Fourth Gospel that it was composed by the son of Zebedee, there is, on the contrary, the strongest reason for believing that he did not write it.” †

“That John is really the author of the Gospel, and that no other planned or interpreted it than he who at all times is named as its author, cannot be doubted or denied, however often in our own times critics have been pleased to doubt and deny it on grounds which are wholly foreign to the subject; on the contrary, every argument, from every quarter to which we can look, every trace and record, combine together to render any serious doubt upon the question absolutely impossible.” (Heinrich Ewald, quoted by Professor Westcott as “calm and decisive words,” which “are simply true.” ‡)

“Those who since the first discussion of this question have been really conversant with it, never could have had, and never have had, a moment’s doubt. As the attack on St. John has become fiercer and fiercer, the truth during

\* *Supernatural Religion*, Ed. 6, vol. ii., p. 470.

† *Ibid.* p. 474.

‡ *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, Ed. 3, p. x. The quotation and comment are repeated in Ed. 4, 1872.

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the last ten or twelve years has been more and more solidly established, error has been pursued into its last hiding-place, and at this moment the facts before us are such that no man who does not will knowingly to choose error and reject truth can dare to say that the Fourth Gospel is not the work of the Apostle John."\*

In one case or the other the human intellect, honestly inquiring for the true, has been convinced of the false. Plain men may well ask, Which are we to believe, or how can we be certain that either is true? The negative criticism has not shrunk from poisoning its arrows with the assertion that bigotry in favour of received opinions has closed the eyes of its opponents to the light of truth. It may sometimes be so; but unless much of the criticism of the present day is strangely misread, there is a blinding bigotry which prevents men from seeing the truth of received opinions simply because they have been received. There are minds to which the "semper, ubique, et ab omnibus" marks out an opinion for rejection, or at least for cavil. And yet the world is wiser than any one man in it, and truth has been written in other languages than German, and seventeen centuries of a belief which has borne the noblest results and commanded the assent of the noblest intellects, will hold its ground against the changing moods of the last fifty years. The "higher criticism" must not wonder if humbler minds withhold their as-

sent to its *dicta*, until it has agreed upon some common ground of faith which is not always shifting, and individual disciples have proved the depth of their own convictions by adhering to them. These combatants in the battle between error and truth are men of war armed in the armour of their schools, but plain men will feel that they have not essayed this armour and cannot wear it; and will go down to the battle with the moral Philistines who threaten Israel, trusting in the simple pebble of the old faith, and in the arm nerved by a firm trust in the presence of God.

The Fourth Gospel foreshadows its own history. It tells of Light, Truth, Life, Love, rejected by the mere intellect, but accepted by the whole man; and it has been with the historical as with the personal Christ represented in its pages. "Men learned to know Him and to trust Him before they fully understood what He was and what He did. The faith which in the Gospel stories we see asked for and given, secured, and educated, is a faith which fastens itself on a living Saviour, though it can but little comprehend the method or even the nature of the salvation . . . As it was with the disciples, so also it is with ourselves. The evidential works have their own most important, most necessary office; but the Lord Himself is His own evidence, and secures our confidence, love, and adoration by what He is, more than by what He does." \*

For the many to whom the evidences as to the authorship of the Fourth Gospel must come as the

\* Ewald, in *Göttingen Gel. Anz.*, Aug. 5, 1863, reviewing Renan's *Vie de Jésus*. Quoted by Gratry, *Jésus Christ*, p. 119, and by Professor Liddon, *Bampton Lectures* for 1866, Ed. 7, p. 218.

\* Bernard, "Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament," *The Bampton Lectures* for 1864, pp. 43, 44.

testimony of others, and to whom the conflict of testimony must oftentimes bring perplexity, the ultimate test must lie in the appeal of the Gospel to the whole man. If the heart studies the Christ as portrayed in this writing, it will need no other proof of His divinity, but will bow before Him with the confession, "Truly this was the Son of God." Yes; and it will feel also that the penman was one who, more deeply than any other of the sons of men, drank of the Spirit of Christ—that he was a disciple who loved the Lord, a disciple whom Jesus loved; and it will feel that the voice of the Church is the voice of the heart of humanity, feeling as itself feels and speaking as itself speaks, that this writing is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and that it is the "Gospel according to St. John."

[For the matter of this section the student may conveniently refer to Lücke, Godet, and Liddon, as before; Lüthardt, *St. John the Author of the First Gospel*, English translation, Clark, 1875, in which the *Appendix on the Literature*, revised and enlarged by Gregory, is a valuable and distinctive feature; Hutton, *Essays Theological and Literary*, vol. i. pp. 144—276, 1871; Sanday, *Authorship and Historical Character of the Fourth Gospel*, 1872; *The Gospels in the Second Century*, 1876; Westcott's *Introduction*, Ed. 4, 1872, and *Canon of the New Testament*, Ed. 3, 1870; or in an easier form, *Bible in the Church*, Ed. 2, 1866; Leathes, *The Witness of St. John to Christ*, 1870, *The Religion of the Christ*, 1874; Lightfoot, Articles in the *Contemporary Review*, beginning in December, 1874; Article, "The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel," in *Edinburgh Review*, January, 1877;

Articles on "St. John, and Modern Criticism," by Beyschlag, in *Contemporary Review*, October and November, 1877, and on the other side, *Supernatural Religion*, Ed. 6, 1875, vol. ii. pp. 251—476; Davidson, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 1868, vol. ii. pp. 323—468; Tayler, *The Fourth Gospel*, Ed. 2, 1870.]

**III. Time when and Place where the Fourth Gospel was written.**—(1) If the Gospel was written by St. John, its date must be placed within the limits of the first century. There is good reason for thinking that the last chapter (see Notes upon it) is an appendix, coming chiefly from the hand of the Apostle himself, but that the closing verses (24 and 25) give the corroborative testimony of others. The fact of an appendix, and the difference of its style from that of the earlier writing, points to an interval of some years, during which, it may be, the original Gospel was known to a limited circle before it was openly published. This appendix is, however, incorporated with the earlier writing in all the oldest copies and versions, and was probably, therefore, thus incorporated during the lifetime of the Apostle. The beginning of the last decade of the first century is a limit, then, after which the Gospel could not have been written by St. John. In fixing a limit before which it could not have been written, there is greater difficulty, but the following considerations point to a date certainly not earlier than A.D. 70, and probably not earlier than A.D. 80.

(a) The absence of all reference to St. John in the Pastoral Epistles of St. Paul.

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(b) The style, though strongly Hebrewic, is much less so than the Book of Revelation. It is Hebrew partly clothed in Greek, and for the development of thought and language we may assign a period of ten or twenty years. The relation of the Epistles and the Apocalypse to the Gospel belongs to the *Introductions* to those books; but it will be found that the Gospel probably occupies a middle place, being considerably later than the Apocalypse, and somewhat earlier than the Epistles.

(c) The subject-matter of the Gospel, while representing a later development of theology than that of the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians, points to a much earlier development than that which we find in the earliest of the Gnostic systems at the beginning of the second century. (Comp. *Excursus A*, p. 422.)

(d) The references to the Jews, their customs, places, &c., are as to things at a distance and in the past, and needing explanation in the present. See, e.g., chaps. iv. 9; v. 1, 2 (comp. xi. 18); v. 16, 18; vii. 13, and the instances given before (pp. 11—15).

The earliest historical evidence we have is that of Irenæus, who places the Gospel according to St. John after the other three, i.e., as he places the Gospels according to St. Mark and St. Luke after the deaths of St. Peter and St. Paul, not earlier than A.D. 70, and probably some years later. (See Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.*, v. 8.)

The general voice of antiquity gave A.D. 85 or 86 as the exact year, and while we cannot regard this as authoritative, it falls in with the probabilities of the case. Without fixing the year thus

definitely, we may regard the date as one which could not be much earlier than A.D. 80, or much later than A.D. 90, and conclude that the Gospel in its present form approximates to the latter, rather than to the earlier date.

(2) The passage of Irenæus above referred to gives us also a definite statement that the place from which the Gospel was written was Ephesus. "Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned on His breast—he again put forth his Gospel while he abode in Ephesus in Asia" (*Against Heresies*, iii. 1, Oxford Trans., p. 204; also Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.*, v. 8). This statement is confirmed by the whole tenor of tradition from the second century downwards, and was never, seemingly, questioned until the commencement of the nineteenth century. It falls in with the other scanty hints of facts in St. John's life, and is in entire harmony with the stand-point of the Gospel. It will be unnecessary to weary the reader with proofs of that which hardly needs to be proved. The facts may be found in a convenient form in Luthardt, *St. John the Author of the Fourth Gospel*, Eng. Trans., pp. 115, 166, but even Davidson admits that "Lützelberger and Keim push their scepticism too far in denying John's residence in Asia Minor."

Again, the indirect argument holds good. If Ephesus is not the place from which the Gospel was written, what other place can be named with any show of probability? The only city besides Ephesus in which we might have expected the thoughts of the Prologue is Alexandria (comp. *Excursus A : Doctrine of the Word*, p. 422), but there is not the shadow

of a reason for connecting St. John with this city.

**IV. The Purpose which the Writer had in view.**—Here, again, there are two lines of evidence which may guide our inquiries: (1) the statements of early writers, which may represent a tradition coming from the time of publication when the purpose was well known; and (2) the indications which may be gathered from the writing itself.

(1) The earliest statement we possess is that of the Muratorian Fragment (see p. 34, and comp. Tregelles, *Canon Muratorianus*, 1867, pp. 1—21, and 32—35), which tells us that “The author of the Fourth Gospel was John, one of the disciples. He said to his fellow disciples and bishops who entreated him, ‘Fast with me for three days from to-day, and whatever shall be made known to each of us, let us relate it to each other.’ In the same night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the Apostles, that John should relate all things in his own name with the recognition of them all. And, therefore, though various elements are taught in the several books of the Gospels, this makes no difference to the faith of believers, since all things are set forth in all of them in one supreme spirit, about the birth, the passion, the resurrection, the conversation with the disciples, and His double advent, the first in the lowliness of humiliation which (?) has been accomplished), the second in the glory of royal power, which is to come. What wonder, therefore, is it if John so constantly brings forward, even in his Epistle, particular (?) phrases), saying in his own person, ‘What we

have seen with our eyes, and heard with our ears, and our hands have handled, these things have we written unto you.’ For he thus professes that he was not only an eye-witness, but also a hearer, and more than this, a writer in order, of all the wonderful works of the Lord.”

On this question the testimony of Irenæus has a special value, from the fact that he was separated from the time of St. John by one generation only, and was directly connected, through Polycarp, with the circle in which the Gospel was first circulated. It may be well, therefore, to quote his words at some length:—“In course of preaching this faith, John, the disciple of the Lord, desirous by preaching of the Gospel to remove the error which Cerinthus had been sowing among men; and long before him those who are called Nicolaitans, who are an offshoot of the knowledge [*Gnosis*] falsely so called; to confound them and persuade men that there is but one God, who made all things by His word, and not, as they affirm, that the Creator is one person, the Father of the Lord another, and that there is a difference of persons between the Son of the Creator and the Christ from the higher *Æons*, who both remained impassible, descending on Jesus, the Son of the Creator, and glided back again to his own Pleroma; and that the Beginning is the Only Begotten, but the Word the true Son of the Only Begotten; and that the created system to which we belong was not made by the First Deity, but by some Power brought very far down below it and cut off from communion in the things which are beyond sight and

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name. All such things, I say, the Lord's disciple desiring to cut off, and to establish in the Church the rule of truth, viz., that there is one God Almighty, who by His Word hath made all things visible and invisible; indicating, also, that by the Word whereby God wrought Creation, in the same also He provided salvation for the men who are part of Creation;—thus did he begin in that instruction which the Gospel contains [then follows chap. i. verses 1—5].” In the next section he quotes verses 10, 11, and 14 against Marcion and Valentinus and other Gnostics who held the Creation by angels or demi-gods. (*Adv. Hær.*, lib. iii., chap. xi., Oxford Trans., pp. 229 *et seq.*)

In an earlier passage Irenæus gives the following account of the heresy of Cerinthus: “And a certain Cerinthus too, in Asia, taught that the world was not made by the First God, but by a certain Power far separated and distant from the Royalty which is above all, and which knows not the God who is over all. And he added that Jesus was not born of a virgin (for that seemed to him impossible), but was the son of Joseph and Mary like all other men, and had more power than men in justice, prudence, and wisdom. And that after His baptism there descended on Him from that Royalty which is above all, Christ in the figure of a dove, and that He then declared the unknown Father and did mighty works; but that in the end Christ again soared back from Jesus, and that Jesus suffered and rose again, but Christ remained impossible as being spiritual” (lib. i., cap. xxvi., Oxford Trans., p. 77)

In lib. iii., cap. iii., Oxford Trans., p. 208, Irenæus relates the story of the Apostle flying from Cerinthus in the bath. This is repeated in Eusebius, iii. 28, Bagster’s Trans., p. 131.

Tertullian, Epiphanius, and Jerome agree in the statement that the Gospel was written to meet the heresy of Cerinthus, but speak of the Ebionites instead of the Nicolaitans.

Clement of Alexandria is quoted by Eusebius, as saying, “John, last of all, perceiving that what had reference to the body in the gospel of our Saviour was sufficiently detailed; and being encouraged by his familiar friends and urged by the Spirit, he wrote a spiritual gospel (*Eccles. Hist.*, lib. vi., cap. xv., Bagster’s Trans., pp. 247—8), and Eusebius himself says, “The three Gospels previously written having been distributed among all, and also handed to him, they say that he admitted them, giving his testimony to their truth; but that there was only wanting in the narrative the account of the things done by Christ among the first of His deeds and at the commencement of the Gospel.

. . . For these reasons the Apostle John, it is said, being entreated to undertake it, wrote the account of the time not recorded by the former Evangelists, and the deeds done by our Saviour which they have passed by . . .” (lib. iii., cap. xxiv., Bagster’s Trans., pp. 126, 127).

We have in these extracts three points of view, distinct but not different, from which it was conceived that the writer undertook his work. His aim was didactic, to teach that which was revealed to him; or it was polemic, to meet

the development of Gnosticism in Asia Minor, of which we find traces in the later Pauline epistles; or it was historic, to fill up by way of supplement those portions of the life of our Lord which earlier evangelists had not recorded. In the later fathers and commentators, now one, now another, of these views is prominent. They do not exclude each other: to teach the truth was the sure way to make war against error; to teach the truth historically was to represent it as it was revealed in the life of Him who was the Truth.

We have to think of the Apostle as living on to the close of the first century, learning in the thoughts and experience of fifty years what the manifestation of Christ's life really was, and quickened by the presence of the promised Paraclete, who was to bring all things to his mind and guide him into all truth (comp. chap. xvi.). He lives among the speculations of men who have tried in their own wisdom to cross the gulf between God and man, and have in Ephesus developed a Gnosticism out of Christianity which is represented by Cerinthus, who was himself trained in Alexandria; just as in this latter city there had been a Gnosticism developed from Judaism, which is represented by Philo. He feels that he has learnt how that gulf was bridged in the person of Jesus Christ; he remembers His acts and words; he knows that in Him, and Him only, does the Divine and human meet; and he writes his own witness at once, in the deeper fulness of its truth, instructing the Church and refuting heresy, and supplying the spiritual Gospel which was as a complement to the existing three.

If we turn to the Fourth Gospel

itself we find that each line of this three-fold purpose may be distinctly traced. The didactic element is apparent throughout. That the writer had before him, not only the instruction of the Church, but also the refutation of the errors of Gnosticism—and that not only in the special features connected with Cerinthus—is clear from the Prologue. We have seen how Irenæus applies this to Cerinthus, but the very term *Δόγμα* (comp. *Excursus A: Doctrine of the Word*, p. 422) shows that the writer did not contemplate his school only. There was an easy connection between Ephesus and Alexandria at the time, and we have an example of it in the teaching of Apollos in Acts xviii. 24. Now the distinctive tenets of all Gnosticism were that the Creator was not the Supreme God, and that matter was the source of all evil. In "all things were created by Him," we have the answer to one; in "The Word was made flesh, the answer to the other.

The writer gives in chap. xx. 31, a formal statement of his own purpose: "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." It is usual to refer to these words as though nothing was further from the writer's thoughts than any polemic purpose. But in the passage quoted from Irenæus, on the heresy of Cerinthus, it will be seen that the separation of the divine Christ from the human Jesus was a prominent tenet. This verse declares that the purpose of the Gospel was to establish the identity of the human Jesus and the Christ who is the Son of God, as an article of faith, that in that faith they might have life through His name.

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Eusebius gives no authority beyond "they say" for the statement that St. John had seen the earlier Gospels, and it does not follow that he had seen them in their present form. That he could have done so is, *a priori*, improbable, and there is no evidence of any such circulation of them as would be implied. It is further improbable from the relation between the subject-matter of the Fourth Gospel as compared with the three; it contains too much that is common to all to be regarded as a mere supplement; it differs too much in arrangement, and even in details, to have been based upon a study of the others. Moreover it is in itself a complete work, and nowhere gives any indication that it was intended to be simply an appendix to other works.

In seeking the origin of the Gospels we have the following general lines to guide us. There would be, probably, in the first generation after the life of Christ an oral Gospel, in which all the chief events of His life and the chief discourses were preserved. In different churches different parts would be committed to writing, and carefully preserved, and compared with similar writings elsewhere. Such documents would form the basis of the Synoptic Gospels. Such documents doubtless existed at Ephesus, and John had access to them; but it is to his personal remembrance of Christ's life and work, and his residence in Jerusalem, and his close union with the Virgin Mary, that we are to trace his special information. Mary, and his own mother Salome, and Mary Magdalene, and Nicodemus, and the family of Bethany, and the Church at Jerusalem, are the

sources from which he would have learnt of events beyond his personal knowledge.

[For the matter of this section comp., in addition to the books quoted, Lücke and Godet as before (this part of Lücke's *Einleitung* is of great value, and may be read in the Prolegomena of Alford, who adopts it, and in that of Wordsworth, who rejects it); Mansel, *The Gnostic Heresies of the First and Second Centuries*, 1875; Neander, *Church History*, § 4, Clark's Eng. Trans., vol. i. pp. 67—93; Ueberweg, *History of Philosophy*, Eng. Trans., 1874, § 77; Wood's *Discoveries at Ephesus*, Lond., 1877.]

**V. Contents and Characteristics of the Gospel.**—The Gospel is divided into two main sections at the close of chap. xii. The great subject of the first of these sections is the manifestation of Christ; and that of the second is the result of this manifestation. The first represents the life; the second, the passion, death, and resurrection. Subdividing these main sections, we have the following outline of the general contents of the Gospel:—

(1) Prologue. The link with the eternity of the past (chap. i. 1—18).

(2) Manifestation of Jesus. Varying degrees of acceptance (chaps. i. 19—iv. 54).

(3) The fuller revelation and growth of unbelief among the Jews (chaps. v. 1—xii. 50).

(4) The fuller revelation and growth of faith among the disciples (chaps. xiii. 1—xvii. 26).

(5) The climax of unbelief. Voluntary surrender and crucifixion of Jesus (chaps. xviii. 1—xix. 42).

(6) The climax of faith. Resur-

rection and appearances of Jesus (chap. xx.).

(7) Epilogue. The link with the eternity of the future (chap. xxi.).

The reader will find a detailed analysis of these sections at the end of this *Introduction*, and inserted for the sake of convenient reference in the following notes. It has been attempted by a consecutive enumeration to indicate the lines of thought running through the whole Gospel; but these are many, and a brief sketch may be helpful to those who attempt to trace them.

(1) The Prologue (chap. i. 1—18) strikes, in a few words, the keynote of the whole. The Word with God, and God, revealed to men, made flesh—this is the central thought. The effect of the revelation, received not, received; light not comprehended in darkness, but ever shining; this, which runs like a thread through the whole Gospel, is as a subsidiary thought present here.

(2) The manifestation of Jesus (chaps. i. 19—iv. 54) is introduced by the witness of the Baptist, and one of the characteristic words of the Gospel, which has already occurred in verse 8 (see Note on it), is made prominent in the very first sentence of the narrative portion. This witness of John is uttered to messengers from the Sanhedrin, is repeated when Jesus is seen coming unto him, and spoken yet again on the following day.

The witness of John is followed by the witness of Christ Himself. At first He manifests Himself in private to the disciples, when their hearts respond to His witness, and at the marriage feast, when the voice of nature joins itself with that of man; and then publicly,

beginning in His Father's house, and proceeding in a widening circle, from the Temple at Jerusalem to the city, and then to Judæa, and then Samaria, and then Galilee. Typical characters represent this manifestation and its effects—Nicodemus, the Master in Israel; the despised woman of despised Samaria, herself steeped in sin; the courtier of alien race, led to faith through suffering and love. This period is one of acceptance in Jerusalem (chap. ii. 23); Judæa (chap. iii. 29); Samaria (chap. iv. 39—42); Galilee (chap. iv. 45, 49); and yet its brightness is crossed by dark lines (chap. ii. 24, 25), and the struggle between light and darkness is not absent (chap. iii. 18, 21).

(3) Following this public manifestation, we have in the third section (chaps. v. 1—xii. 50) the fuller revelation of Christ; and, side by side with it, the progressive stages of unbelief among the Jews.

He is Life, and shows this in the energy given to the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda; but they persecute Him because He did these things on the Sabbath day. He shows that His work is one with the Father's, but they seek to kill Him as a blasphemer. Thus early is the issue of the struggle foreshadowed; and thus early does He point out that the final issue is not in physical death, and trace to the absence of moral preparation the true reason of His rejection (chap. v.).

He is Life, and shows this in blessing the food which gives sustenance to thousands, and in declaring Himself to be “the bread of life,” but they think of manna in the desert, and murmur at one whom they knew to be Jesus-bar-

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Joseph claiming to have come down from heaven; and again the line between reception and rejection is drawn. Many go back, but some rise to a higher faith; yet even the light which shines in this inner circle is crossed by the presence of one who is a devil (chap. vi.).

He is Truth, and declares at the Feasts of Tabernacles that His teaching is from heaven, and that He Himself is from heaven, whither He will return. The perception of truth is in the will to obey it. He that willeth to do His will shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God. The effect of this teaching is that many believe, but that the Pharisees send officers to take Him. He is Life, and declares that in Him is the living water which the ritual of the great day of the Feast represented, and this is followed by a division among the people, and even in the Sanhedrin itself (chap. vii.).

He is Light, and declares Himself to be the true Light of the World, of which the illumination of the Feast was but a type. They murmur at successive points in His teaching, and in answer He declares to them what the true witness is, what His own return to the Father is, what are true discipleship and true freedom and true life, by the word of the Son, who was before Abraham. Their hatred passes from words to acts, and they take up stones to cast at Him (chap. viii. 12—59). [The paragraph from chaps. vii. 53—viii. 11 does not belong to this place. See Note upon it.]

He is Light, and shows this by giving physical sight to the man born blind. The Pharisees seek to disprove, and then to discredit, the miracle, and again there is a division. Some say that this

man is not of God because He keepeth not the Sabbath. Others ask how a man that is a sinner can do such miracles. Jesus Himself declares the separation which His coming makes between those who are spiritually blind and those who spiritually see (chap. ix.).

He is Love, and declares this in the allegory of the Good Shepherd. Again a division is made prominent between those who are willing to accept and those who have willed to reject Him. Then comes Dedication, and the request to declare plainly whether He is the Christ. The answer brings again to them the earlier teaching of moral preparedness, and they take up stones to stone Him. They justify their act by the charge of blasphemy, which He proves from the Scriptures to be without foundation. But their determination has gone beyond the reach of reason, and they seek again to take Him. Rejected by His own, and in His own city, He withdraws from it to Bethany beyond Jordan. The darkness comprehends not the light, but still it shineth, and "many believed on Him there" (chap. x.).

He is Life, and Truth, and Love, and shows this in going again to Judaea to conquer death, and reveal the fuller truth of the Resurrection and Life, and sympathise with the sorrowing home. The attributes of divinity are so fully manifested that many of the Jews believe, but with the clearer light the darkness is also made more fully visible, and the Sanhedrin formally decree His death. When this decree is passed He again withdraws to the wilderness, but disciples are still with Him (chap. xi.).

As the Passover draws near He is again at Bethany. Love to Him is shown in the devotion of Mary; the selfishness and hatred which shut out love, in the murmur of Judas and the consultation of the chief priests to destroy the life of Lazarus which Jesus had restored. But conviction has seized the masses of the people, and the King is received into the royal city with shouts of "Hosanna!" Even the Pharisees feel that the "world is gone after Him," and there is present the earnest of a wider world than that of which they thought. Men came from the West to the cross, as men had come from the East to the cradle, and are the firstfruits of the moral power which is to draw all men. Life conquering in death is the thought suggested by the presence of the Greeks; light and darkness is again the form in which the thought of His rejection by the Jews is clothed. But the struggle is drawing to a close, and the writer adds his own thoughts and gathers up earlier words of Jesus on those who rejected Light and Truth and Life and Love (chap. xii.).

(4) With the next section (chaps. xiii. 1—xvii. 26) we pass from the revelation to the Jews to the fuller revelation to the disciples. It is the passing from hatred to love, from darkness to light; but as in the deepest darkness of rejection rays of light are ever present, so the fullest light of acceptance is never free from shadows.

His Love is shown by the significant act of washing the disciples' feet, and this is spiritually interpreted. His words of love cannot, however, apply to all, for the dark presence of the betrayer is still with

them. When Hatred withdraws from the presence of Love, and Judas goes out into the night, then the deeper thoughts of Jesus (which are as the revelation of heaven to earth) are spoken without reserve. This discourse continues from chaps. xiii. 31—xvi. 33, when it passes into the prayer of the seventeenth chapter.

It tells them of His glory because He is going to the Father; of the Father's house where He will welcome them; that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; that being absent, He will still be present, answering their prayers, sending to them the Paraclete, abiding in them; that His peace shall remain with them. It tells, in the allegory of the Vine, that there is an unseen spiritual union between Him and the Church, and every individual member of it; that there is, therefore, to be union between themselves; that the world will necessarily hate them because they are not of it; but that the Paraclete in them, and they themselves, of their own knowledge, should be the witness to the world.

It tells them the truth so hard to learn—that His own departure is expedient; declares the coming and the office of the Paraclete, and His own spiritual power with them, and comforts them with the thought of the full revelation of the Father, and the final victory over the world which He has overcome. Their faith rises to the sure conviction that He is from God. But even this full acceptance is not unclouded; He knows they will all be scattered, and leave Him alone.

And then having in fulness of love taught them, He lifts His eyes to heaven and prays for Himself, for the disciples, and for all believers,

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that in Him, as believers, they may have the communion with the God-head which comes from the revelation of the Father through the Son.

(5) But here again in the narrative Darkness alternates with Light, and Hatred with Love. From the sacred calm of this inner circle we pass (chaps. xviii. 1—xix. 42) to the betrayal and apprehension, the trials before the Jewish and Roman authorities, the committal and crucifixion, the death and burial. Unbelief has reached its climax, and hatred gazes upon Him whom it has crucified.

(6) But love is greater than hatred, and light than darkness, and life than death. From the climax of unbelief we pass to the climax of faith. Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, and Joseph of Arimathaea, join with the band of women in the last office of love. The appearance to Mary Magdalene, to the ten Apostles, to the eleven now including Thomas, has carried conviction to all, and drawn from him who is last to believe the fullest expression of faith, "My Lord and my God" (chap. xx.).

The writer has traced the struggle between acceptance and rejection through its successive stages, and now that the victory is won the purpose of his work is fulfilled. There is a faith more blessed than sight, and these things are written that we may believe.

(7) The things which the writer has told are but a few of those with which his memory was stored. There were many signs not written in this book. He afterwards (comp. Notes on chap. xxi.) adds one of those which serves as a link with the future, in part, perhaps, to prevent a misconception which had

sprung up about his own life. Other disciples, too, give to his writing the stamp of their own knowledge of its certain truth.

Such are the characteristics of this Gospel. We feel as we read them that we are in a region of thoughts widely different from those of the earlier Gospels. The characteristic thoughts naturally express themselves in characteristic words, and many of these are dwelt upon in the following Notes. The reader will not need to be reminded, as he again and again comes upon the words "light" (which occurs twenty-three times), "life" (fifty-two times), "love" (seven times; 1 John seventeen times), "truth" (twenty-five times), "true" (ideally, nine times), "witness" (substantive and verb, forty-seven times), "believe" (ninety-eight times), "world" (seventy-eight times), "sign" (seventeen times), that he has in such words the special forms which express the special thoughts which have come to us through St. John. Some characteristics in style have been pointed out in § II. as bearing upon the authorship of the Gospel.

**VI. Sketch of the Literature of the Subject.**—References have already been given, under the earlier sections of this *Introduction*, to works where the reader may find fuller information upon the different topics dealt with. Here it is intended to note such works as the ordinary reader may without difficulty have access to, and which bear upon the subject-matter of the Gospel itself.

Of the older commentaries, Chrysostom's *Homilies on the Gospel of St. John*, and the *Tractatus 124 in Joannem* of Augustine, may be read

in the Oxford Library of the Fathers. The *Commentary of Cyril of Alexandria* has lately been translated by Mr. P. E. Pusey, Oxford, 1875. The *Aurea Catena* of Thomas Aquinas is accessible in the Oxford translation of 1841—45.

Of more modern Commentaries, Lampe's three quarto volumes in Latin (*Basileæ*, 1725—27), take the first place, and are a storehouse from which almost all his successors have freely borrowed. The century and a half which has passed since his book appeared has been fruitful in works on St. John. A selection of exegetical works prefixed to the second volume of Meyer's *Commentary*, Eng. Trans., 1875, contains more than forty published during this period, and the number may be largely increased. The Appendix to the English translation of Luthardt's *St. John the Author of the Fourth Gospel*, contains a list of some 500 works and articles upon the authenticity and genuineness alone, which have been published since the year 1790.

In our own day the best results of New Testament criticism, as applied to this Gospel, have been presented to the English reader in the *Commentaries* of Tholuck, Ed. 7, 1857, Eng. Trans., 1860; Olshausen, edited by Ebrard and Wiesinger, 1862, Eng. Trans., 1855; Bengel, Eng. Trans., 1874; Luthardt, Ed. 2, 1875—6, Eng. Trans., 1877; Godet, Ed. 2, with critical Introduction, 1877, Eng. Trans., 1877; Meyer, Ed. 5, 1869, Eng. Trans., 1875, all published by Messrs. Clark, of Edinburgh.

In our own country the *Commentaries* of Wordsworth, 1868, and Alford, Ed. 7, 1874, are known to all students of the New Testament,

and the latter work has been also arranged specially for English readers (1868). Two works, which are less known than they deserve to be, may be specially noted as furnishing in a convenient form the patristic interpretation: *Commentary on the Authorised English Version of the Gospel according to St. John*, by the Rev. F. H. Dunwell, London, 1872; and *The Gospel of John, illustrated from Ancient and Modern Authors*, by Rev. J. Ford, London, 1852. Two other English books on this Gospel deal specially with its subject-matter: the well-known *Discourses at Lincoln's Inn* of the late Frederick Denison Maurice, a work marked by his spiritual insight and earnest devotion, and containing a striking criticism on Baur's mythical theory, Camb. 1857; and *The Doctrinal System of St. John*, by Professor Lias, London, 1875.

For all questions of geography, chronology, and Jewish antiquities, the English reader has the latest results of scholarship in the *Biblical Dictionaries* edited by Dr. William Smith and by Dr. Kitto, Ed. 3, 1866; in Dean Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*; in the *Reports* of the "Palestine Exploration Fund"; in the *Synopsis* of Dr. Karl Wieseler, Eng. Trans., 1864; in the *Chronological and Geographical Introduction* of Dr. Ch. Ed. Caspari, Eng. Trans., 1876. Special reference may be made to the articles on Jewish subjects by Dr. Ginsburg in Kitto's *Cyclopædia*. See, e.g., in connection with this Gospel the articles on "Education," "Dispersion," "Dedication," "Purim," "Passover," and "Tabernacles."

On questions of the text, and the translation of the text, a very valuable help has been furnished in

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*The Holy Bible, with Various Renderings and Readings from the Best Authorities*, London, 1876; this Gospel has also been revised by "Five Clergymen," London, 1857, and the results have been incorporated in *The New Testament, Authorised Version Revised*, London, 1876, of the late Dean Alford, who was one of them.

The aim of the present writer has been to help the English reader to understand the Gospel according to St. John. Within the brief limits of time and space at his command, he has tried to think out and express the writer's meaning; and in the many difficulties which beset his path, has not consciously neglected any important guide. He is not unaware that some subjects are dwelt upon but briefly, and that others are entirely passed over, upon which the reader may seek information; but the pages of a Commentary are not those of a Theological Encyclopædia, and his own pages are but part of a greater whole. He trusts that

no part of any text has been passed over without an honest attempt to ascertain and give its true meaning. The attempt will not be in vain if it helps any who have not access to works of greater learning and scholarship, to study and learn for themselves the meaning of words which, without such study, no one can teach.

It remains for the writer to express his obligations to the works which he has above mentioned, and to many others from which, directly and indirectly, thoughts have been suggested. To Lücke, Lüthardt (especially in the Analysis), Godet, and Alford (both Commentary and Translation), he is conscious of owing a constant debt; but the work which has influenced his own thoughts most in the study of the New Testament, and without which the following Notes, though entirely differing from it in purpose and character, could not have been written, is the *Kritisch Exegetisches Handbuch* of Dr. Heinrich Meyer.

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## ANALYSIS

### 1. Prologue (chap. i. 1—18).

#### THE WORD

- (1) *was God* (verses 1—5);
- (2) *became man* (verses 6—13);
- (3) *revealed the Father* (verses 14—18).

### 2. Manifestation of Jesus. Varying Degrees of Acceptance (chaps. i. 19—iv. 54).

- (1) THE WITNESS OF THE BAPTIST (chap. i. 19—40):
  - (a) *To the messengers of the Sanhedrin* (verses 19—28);

(b) *At the appearance of Jesus* (verses 29—34);

(c) *To the two disciples* (verses 35—40).

(2) JESUS MANIFESTS HIMSELF TO INDIVIDUALS (chaps. i. 41—ii. 11):

(a) *To the first disciples—the witness of man* (verses 41—51);

(b) *At Cana of Galilee—the witness of nature* (verses 1—11).

(3) JESUS MANIFESTS HIMSELF PUBLICLY (ii. 12—iv. 54):

- (a) In Jerusalem—the Temple (chap. ii. 12—22);
- (b) In Jerusalem—the city (chaps. ii. 23—iii. 21);  
Nicodemus:  
The new birth (verses 1—8);  
Belief (verses 9—15);  
Judgment (verses 16—21);
- (c) In Judæa (chap. iii. 22—36). The Baptist.
- (d) In Samaria (chap. iv. 1—42). The woman of Samaria, and the living water (verses 1—16). The people of Samaria, and the fields white unto harvest (verses 17—42);
- (e) In Galilee (chap. iv. 43—54). Received by the people. The courtier's faith.

### 3. The fuller Revelation, and Growth of Unbelief among the Jews (chaps. v. 1—xii. 50).

- (1) JESUS IS LIFE (chaps. v. 1—vi. 71).
  - (a) This follows from the unity of Son and Father (chap. v.).
  - (a) Energy given to strengthen the weak (verses 1—9).
  - (b) Persecution by the Jews (verses 10—18).
  - (γ) Teaching of Jesus (verses 19—47):  
The Father's work also the Son's (verses 19 and 20);  
The spiritual resurrection and judgment (verses 21—27);  
The physical resurrection and judgment (verses 28—30);  
Witness, and the reason

- of its rejection (verses 31—47).
- (b) His Incarnation is life for mankind (chap. vi.).
- (a) Food given to sustain the hungry (verses 1—15).
- (β) His body not subject to natural laws (verses 16—21).
- (γ) The multitude follow Him (verses 22—25).
- (δ) Teaching of Jesus (verses 26—58):  
The work of God (verses 26—29);  
The Bread of Life (verses 30—50);  
The true food (flesh) and the true drink (blood) (verses 51—58);
- (ε) The effect of the teaching—on the one hand defection, on the other a fuller confession of faith (verses 59—71).
- (2) JESUS IS TRUTH AND LIGHT AND LOVE (chaps. vii. 1—x. 42).
  - (a) Jesus is Truth (chap. vii.).
  - (a) The Feast of Tabernacles (verses 1—13).
  - (β) The teaching of Jesus (verses 14—39):  
His doctrine is from the Father (verses 15—24);  
He is Himself from the Father (verses 25—31);  
He will return to the Father (verses 32—39).
  - (γ) The effect of the teaching  
Division among the multitude and in the Sanhedrin (verses 40—52).
  - (b) Jesus is Light (chaps. viii. 12—ix. 41).

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- (a) He declares Himself to be the Light, and appeals to the witness of the Father and of Himself (verses 12—20).
- (B) His return to the Father misunderstood by the Jews, and explained by Him (verses 21—29).
- (γ) True discipleship and freedom (verses 30—59). Freedom by the Son's word (verses 30—36). Natural and ethical sonship (verses 37—47). Eternal life by the Son's word. The Son's eternity (verses 48—59).
- (δ) Physical light given to the man born blind (chap. ix. 1—42): The miracle itself (verses 1—12). The objections of the Pharisees and the witness of the sufferer (verses 13—34). Physical light and darkness; spiritual light and darkness (verses 35—41).
- (ε) *Jesus is Love* (chap. x. 1—42).
- (a) The Good Shepherd, who giveth His life for the sheep (verses 1—20).
- (B) The discourse at the Feast of the Dedication (verses 22—38): The true sheep hear the Shepherd's voice (verses 22—30). The charge of blasphemy shown by their Scriptures to be groundless (verses 30—38).
- (γ) Rejected in Jerusalem, Jesus goes away beyond Jordan (verses 39—42).
- (3) LIFE, TRUTH, LIGHT, AND LOVE MORE FULLY MANIFESTED. CORRESPONDING INCREASE OF THE UNBELIEF OF THE JEWS (chaps. xi. 1—xii. 50):
- (a) *Lazarus restored to life* (chap. xi. 1—46). The journey to Bethany. Sleep and death (verses 1—16).
  - (B) The interview with Martha. The Resurrection and the Life (verses 17—27).
  - (γ) The interview with Mary. Sorrow and love (verses 28—38).
  - (δ) The open sepulchre. The corruptible and incorruption (verses 39—46).
  - (b) *The council of the Jews. The decree of death against the Giver of life* (verses 47—53).
  - (c) *The withdrawal to Ephraim. Many seek for Jesus* (verses 54—57).
  - (d) *The supper at Bethany. Mary, Judas, the chief priests (love, selfishness, hatred)* (chap. xii. 1—11).
  - (e) *The entry into Jerusalem. The King and His people* (verses 12—19).
  - (f) *The wider kingdom* (verses 20—36). Certain Greeks would see Jesus. The firstfruits of the West (verses 20—22). The seed and the harvest. Life in death (verses 23—26).

The world-wide attraction of the Cross. Light in darkness (verses 27—36).

(g) *The final issue of the unbelief of the Jews.*

(a) The writer's own judgment (verses 37—43):  
On no-faith (verses 37—41);  
On half-faith (verses 42, 43).

(b) The judgment of Jesus (verses 44—50).

The rejection of light (verse 46); love ("that I might save the world," verse 47); truth (verse 49); life (verse 50).

#### 4. The fuller Revelation, and Growth of Faith among the Disciples (chaps. xiii, 1—xvii. 26).

(1) LOVE MANIFESTED IN HUMILIATION (chap. xiii. 1—30).

(a) *The washing of the disciples' feet* (verses 1—11);  
(b) *The spiritual interpretation of this act* (verses 12—28);  
(c) *The Betrayal. Hatred passes from the presence of love* (verses 21—30).

(2) THE LAST WORDS OF DEEPEST MEANING TO THE FAITHFUL FEW (chaps. xiii. 31—xvi. 33).

(a) *His glory is at hand, because He is going to the Father; they are therefore to love one another* (verses 31—38).

(b) *In the Father's house He will receive them to Himself. He is the Way, the Truth, the Life* (chap. xiv. 1—10).

(c) *Being in the Father, He will be present in the disciples* (verses 11—24):

(a) By answering their prayers (vers. 12—14);  
(b) By sending to them the Paraclete (verses 15—17);

(γ) By abiding in them (verses 18—24).

(d) *His legacy of peace to them* (verses 25—31).

(e) *Relation of Jesus and His disciples to each other; and to the world* (chap. xv. 1—27).

(a) Their union with Him. The True Vine: union from within (verses 1—11). Comp. the Good Shepherd (chap. x.); union from without.

(b) Their union with each other (verses 12—17).

(γ) The hatred of the world (verses 18—24):  
The reason of it (verses 18—21);  
The sinfulness of it (verses 22—25).

(d) The witness to the world (verses 26, 27):  
By the Paraclete (verse 26);  
By the disciples (verse 27).

(f) *Their relation to the world and the promise of the Paraclete explained more fully* (chap. xvi. 1—33).

(a) Though the world will hate them, it is still expedient that He should depart from them (verses 1—7).

(b) The coming of the Paraclete and His office (verses 8—15).

(γ) His own departure and return. Their sorrow the birth-pangs of joy (verses 16—24).

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(b) He promises a full revelation of the Father (verses 25—28).

(c) Their faith is now weak, though they think it strong (verses 29—32); their future shall be one of tribulation, but He has overcome the world (verse 33).

(3) LOVE MANIFESTED IN HIS INTERCESSORY PRAYER (chap. xvii. 1—26). HE PRAYS—

(a) *For Himself; the glory of the Son* (verses 1—5);

(b) *For the disciples; their union with the Father and the Son* (verses 6—19);

(c) *For all believers; their union with the Godhead* (verses 20, 21); *their communion with the Godhead* (verses 22—24); which results from the revelation to them of the Father (verses 25, 26).

5. The Climax of Unbelief. Voluntary Surrender and Crucifixion of Jesus (chaps. xviii. 1—xix. 42).

(1) THE BETRAYAL AND APPREHENSION (verses 1—11).

(2) THE TRIALS BEFORE THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES (verses 12—27):

(a) *Before Annas* (vers. 12—23);

(b) *Before Caiaphas* (verse 24).

(c) *Denied by St. Peter* (verses 17, 25, 27).

(3) THE TRIALS BEFORE THE ROMAN PROCONSUL (chaps. xviii. 28—xix. 16):

(a) *The first examination. The kingdom of truth* (verses 28—40);

(b) *The second examination. The scourging and mock royalty* (chap. xix. 1—6);

(c) *The third examination. The power from above* (verses 7—11);

(d) *The public trial and committal* (verses 12—16).

(4) JESUS SUBMITS TO DEATH (chap. xix. 17—42):

(a) *The Crucifixion* (verses 17—24);

(b) *The sayings on the Cross* (verses 25—30);

(c) *The proof of physical death* (verses 31—37);

(d) *The body in the Sepulchre* (verses 38—42).

6. The Climax of Faith. Resurrection and Appearances of Jesus (chap. xxi.).

(1) ST. PETER AND ST. JOHN AT THE EMPTY SEPULCHRE. THEY SEE AND BELIEVE (verses 1—10).

(2) MARY MAGDALENE AT THE SEPULCHRE. THE ANGELS. "RABBONI." CHANGED CONDITIONS OF LIFE (verses 11—18).

(3) THE FIRST APPEARANCE TO THE TEN. PEACE TO THEM AND TO THE WORLD (verses 19—23).

(4) THE APPEARANCE TO THE ELEVEN. "MY LORD AND MY GOD" (verses 24—29).

(5) CLOSE OF THE ORIGINAL GOSPEL AT THIS HIGHEST REACH OF FAITH. ITS OBJECT: LIFE THROUGH BELIEVING (verses 30, 31).

7. The Epilogue to the Gospel. The Link between the Past and the Future (chap. xxi.).

(1) THE DRAUGHT OF FISHES (verses 1—8).

# ST. JOHN.

- (2) THE BREAKFAST. THE THIRD  
MANIFESTATION OF JESUS  
TO THE DISCIPLES (verses  
9—14).  
(3) THE TEST AND THE COMMISSION.  
ST. PETER AND ST.  
JOHN (verses 15—23).

- (4) THE CLOSE OF THE GOSPEL  
CORROBORATIVE WITNESS  
TO ITS TRUTH:  
(a) *By fellow-disciples* (verse  
24);  
(b) *By an amanuensis* (verse  
25)

Quarti euangeliorum Iohannis ex decipolis  
cohortantibus condescipulis et ep̄s suis  
dixit conieunate mihi · odie triduo et quid  
cuique fuerit reuelatum alterutrum  
nobis ennarremus eadem nocte reue  
latum andreae ex apostolis ut recognis  
centibus cunctis Iohannis suo nomine  
cunta discibret et ideo licet uaria sin  
culis euangeliorum libris principia  
doceantur Nihil tamen differt creden  
tium fedei cum uno ac principali sp̄u de  
clarata sint in omnibus omnia de natu  
tate de passione de resurrectione  
de conuesatione cum decipulis suis  
ac de gemino eius aduentu  
Primo In humilitate dispectus quod fo  
tu secundum potestate regali pre  
clarum quod foturum est. quid ergo  
mirum si Iohannes tam constanter  
sincula etiā In epistulis suis proferat  
dicens In semeipsu Quae uidimus oculis  
nostris et auribus audiuimus et manus  
nostraē palpauerunt haec scripsimus

uobis

[Tregelles, CANON MURATORIANUS.

See *Introduction*, page 20.]

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN

CHAPTER I.—<sup>(1)</sup> In  
the beginning was the

Word, and the Word was  
with God, and the Word

## [1. Prologue (chap. i. 1—18).]

### THE WORD

- (1) *was God* (verses 1—5);
- (2) *became man* (verses 6—13);
- (3) *revealed the Father* (verses 14—18).]

<sup>(1)</sup> **In the beginning.**—The reference to the opening words of the Old Testament is obvious, and is the more striking when we remember that a Jew would constantly speak of and quote from the book of Genesis as *Berēshith* ("in the beginning"). It is quite in harmony with the Hebrew tone of this Gospel to do so, and it can hardly be that St. John wrote his *Berēshith* without having that of Moses present to his mind, and without being guided by its meaning. We have then, in the earlier words, a law of interpretation for the later, and this law excludes every such sense as "the Everlasting Father," or "the divine wisdom," which is before all things, though both these have been supported by here and there a name of weight; much more does this law, strengthened as it is by the whole context, exclude any such sense as "the commencement of Christ's work on earth," which owes its existence to the foregone conclusion of a theory, and is marked by the absence of any

support of weight. Our law seems equally to exclude from these words the idea of "anteriority to time," which is expressed, not in them, but in the substantive verb which immediately follows. The Mosaic conception of "beginning" is marked by the first creative act. St. John places himself at the same starting point of time, but before he speaks of any creation he asserts the pre-existence of the Creator. In this "beginning" there already "was" the Word. (See expressions of this thought in chap. xvii. 5; Prov. viii. 23; 1 John i. 1; Rev. iii. 14.)

**Was the Word.**—See *Excursus A: Doctrine of the Word.*

**With God.**—These words express the co-existence, but at the same time the distinction of person. They imply relation with, intercourse with. (Comp. the "in the bosom of the Father" of verse 18, and "Let us make man" of Gen. i. 26.) "Throned face to face with God," "the gaze ever directed towards God," have been given as paraphrases, and the full sense cannot be expressed in fewer words. The "with" represents "motion towards." The Being whose existence is asserted in the "was" is regarded as distinct, but not alone, as ever going forth in communion

was God. (2) The same was in the beginning with God.<sup>a</sup> (3) All things were made by him; <sup>b</sup> and with-

<sup>a</sup> Gen. 1.1.<sup>b</sup> Col. 1.16.

out him was not any thing made that was made. (4) In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

with God. (Comp. the use of the same word "with" in Matt. xiii. 56; xxvi. 15; Mark vi. 3; ix. 19; 1 Cor. xvi. 6, 7; Gal. i. 18; iv. 18.)

**Was God.**—This is the completion of the graduated statement. It maintains the distinction of person, but at the same time asserts the oneness of essence.

(2) **The same was.**—This is a summary in one clause of the three assertions made in the first verse.

**The same**, that is, the Word who was God, existed before any act of creation, and in that existence was a person distinct from God. Yet it is more than a re-statement. We have arrived at the thought that the Word was one in nature with God. From this higher point of view, the steps below us are more clearly seen. The Word was God; the eternal pre-existence and personality are included in the thought.

(3) **From the person of the Word** we are guided to think of His creative work. The first chapter of Genesis is still present to the mind, but a fuller meaning can now be given to its words. All things came into existence by means of the pre-existent Word, and of all the things that now exist none came into being apart from Him.

**All things.**—The words express in the grandeur of an unthinkable array of units what is expressed in totality by "the world" in verse 10. The completion of the thought by the negative statement of the opposite brings sharply before us

the infinitely little in contrast with the infinitely great. Of all these units not one is by its vastness beyond, or by its insignificance beneath His creative will. For the relation of the Word to the Father in the work of creation, comp. Col. i. 15, 16.

For the form of this verse, which is technically known as antithetic parallelism, comp. chaps. v. 8, 20; viii. 23; x. 27, 28; 1 John ii. 4, 27, *et al.* It is found not unfrequently in other parts of the New Testament, but it is a characteristic of St. John's Hebrew style. Its occurrence in the poetry of the Old Testament, *e.g.*, in the Psalms (Ps. lxxxix. 30, 31, *et al.*) will be familiar to all.

(4) **In him was life.**—The creation, the calling into existence life in its varied forms, leads up to the source of this life. It is in the Word by original being, while of the highest creature made "in the image of God" we are told that God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Gen. ii. 7).

"Life" has here no limitation, and is to be understood in its widest sense; the life of the body, even of organisms which we commonly think of as inanimate, the life of the soul, the life of the spirit; life in the present, so far as there is communion with the eternal source of life; life in the future, when the idea shall be realised and the communion be complete.

**Was.**—This is in the Greek the

(5) And the light shineth  
in darkness; and the

darkness comprehended it  
not.

same verb of existence that we have had in verses 1 and 2, and is different from the word in verse 3. Comp. Notes on verse 6, and chap. viii. 58. It places us, then, at the same starting point of time. The Word was ever life, and from the first existence of any creature became a source of life to others. But the "was" of the first clause of this verse should not be pressed, for we are not quite certain that the original text contained it. Two of our oldest MSS. have "is," which is supported by other evidence, and is not in itself an improbable reading. The meaning in this case would be "in the Word there ever is life." Creation is not merely a definite act. There is a constant development of the germs implanted in all the varied forms of being, and these find their sustaining power in the one central source of life. The thought will meet us again in verse 17; but see especially the expression, "upholding all things by the word of His power" (Heb. i. 3).

**And the life was the light of men.**—We are led from the relation of the Word to the universe to His relation to mankind. That which to lower beings in the scale of creation was more or less fully life, as the nature of each was more or less receptive of its power, is to the being endowed with a moral nature and made in the divine image the satisfaction of every moral need, and the revelation of the divine Being. The "was" still carries us back to the first days of time, when creation in all the beauty of

its youth was unstained by sin, when no night had fallen on the moral world, but when there was the brightness of an ever-constant noon-tide in the presence of God. But here, too, the "was" passes in sense into the "is." "God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all." In every man there are rays of light, stronger or feebler, in greater or lesser darkness. In every man there is a power to see the light, and open his soul to it, and the more he has it still to crave for more. This going forth of the soul to God, is the seeking for life. The Word is the going forth of God to the soul. He is life. In the feeling after, there is finding. The moral struggle is the moral strength. The eye that seeks for light cannot seek in vain. The life was and is the light of men.

**(5) And the light shineth in darkness.**—The vision of brightness is present but for a moment, and passes away before the black reality of the history of mankind. The description of Paradise occupies but a few verses of the Old Testament. The outer darkness casts its gloom on every page. But in the moral chaos, too, God said, "Let there be light; and there was light." The first struggle of light into and through darkness until the darkness received it, rolled back before it, passed away into it—the repeated comprehension of light by darkness, as in the dawn of every morning the night passes into day, and the earth now shrouded in blackness is now bathed in the clear white

<sup>(6)</sup> There was a man sent | A.D. 26. | from God, whose name was

light of an Eastern sun—this has its counterpart in the moral world. There, too, the Sun of Righteousness has shone, is every shining; but as the Apostle looks back on the history of the pre-Christian world, or, it may be, looks back on the earthly ministry of Christ Himself, he seeks in vain for the victory of truth, for the hearts of nations, or of men, penetrated through and through with heaven's light, and he sums up the whole in one sad negation, "The darkness comprehended it not." Yet in this very sadness there is firm and hopeful faith. The emphatic present declares that the light still, always, "shineth in darkness." True are those words of patriarch, lawgiver, prophet, as they followed the voice which called, or received God's law for men, or told forth the word which came to them from Him; true are they of every poet, thinker, statesman, who has grasped some higher truth, or chased some lurking doubt, or taught a nation noble deeds; true are they of every evangelist, martyr, philanthropist, who has carried the light of the gospel to the heart of men, who has in life or death witnessed to its truth, who has shown its power in deeds of mercy and of love; true are they of the humblest Christian who seeks to walk in the light, and from the sick-chamber of the lowliest home may be letting a light shine before men which leads them to glorify the Father which is in heaven. The Light is ever shining, oftentimes, indeed, coloured as it passes through the differing minds of different men, and meeting us

across the space that separates continents, and the time that separates ages, in widely varying hues; but these shades pass into each other, and in the harmony of all is the pure light of truth.

**Comprehended it not.**—The meaning of this word differs from that rendered "knew not" in verse 10. The thought here is that the darkness did not lay hold of, did not appropriate the light, so as itself to become light; the thought there is that individuals did not recognise it. Comp. Rom. ix. 30; 1 Cor. ix. 24; Phil. iii. 12, 13, where the same Greek word occurs. See also Eph. iii. 18, which is the only passage in the New Testament, besides the present one, where the word is rendered by "comprehend."

<sup>(6)</sup> **There was a man,** or, *There appeared a man.* The word is the same as that which is used in verse 3, "were made," "was made," and, as contrasted with the verb "was" in verses 1, 2, 4, signifies the coming into being, as contrasted with original existence. In the same way "man" is emphatically opposed to "the Word," who is the subject of the previous verses. "The Word was God;" the man was "sent from God."

**Whose name was John.**—The name was not uncommon, but it is striking that it is given here without the usual distinctive "Baptist." The writer stood to him in the relation of disciple to teacher. To him he was *the John*. A greater teacher had not then appeared, but when He did appear, former teacher and disciple alike bear witness to Him. Great as was the fore-

John.<sup>a</sup> <sup>(7)</sup> The same came  
for a witness, to bear wit-  
ness of the Light, that all

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 3.  
<sup>1.</sup>

men through him might  
believe. <sup>(8)</sup> He was not that  
Light, but was sent to bear

runner, the least in the kingdom of heaven became greater than he was, and to after ages the disciple became *the John*, and his earlier master is given the title "Baptist," which distinguishes the man and commemorates the work.

<sup>(7)</sup> **For a witness.**—Stress is laid upon the work of John as "witness." This was generally the object of his coming. It was specially to "bear witness of the Light." The purpose of testimony is conviction "that all men through him might believe," i.e., through John, through his witness. Compare with this purpose of the Baptist's work the purpose of the Apostle's writing, as he himself expresses it in the closing words of chap. xx.; and also the condition and work of the Apostleship, as laid down by St. Peter at the first meeting after the Resurrection (Acts i. 21, 22). The word "witness," with its cognate forms, is one of the key-notes of the Johannine writings recurring alike in the Gospel, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse. This is partly concealed from the general reader by the various renderings, "record," "testimony," "witness," for the one Greek root; but he may see by consulting any English concordance under these words, how frequently the thought was in the Apostle's mind. See especially Rev. i. 2, 9.

<sup>(8)</sup> **He was not that Light,**  
but was sent.—It is necessary  
to repeat the statement of John's

position and work in an emphatic form. Now first for 400 years a great teacher had appeared in Israel. The events of his birth and life had excited the attention of the masses; his bold message, like the cry of another Elias, found its way in burning words to the slumbering hearts of men; and even from the least likely classes, from Pharisee and Sadducee, from publican and soldier, there came the heart's question, "What shall we do?" The extent of the religious revival does not impress us, because it passed into the greater which followed, but the statement of a publican living at the time is that "Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan, went out to him, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins" (Matt. iii. 5, 6). But what was this power in their midst? Who could be the person uttering these more than human words? A comparison of verses 19 and 20 in this chapter with Luke iii. 15 shows a widespread opinion that he was at least possibly the Messiah. He himself with true greatness recognised the greater, but as in many a like case in after days, the followers had not all the leader's nobility of soul. We shall meet signs of this in chaps. iii. 26 and iv. 1. We find traces of it in Matt. ix. 14, &c.; and even in Ephesus, as late as St. Paul's third missionary journey, we find "certain disciples" knowing nothing more than "John's baptism" (Acts

witness of that Light.  
<sup>(9)</sup> That was the true Light,  
 which lighteth every man

that cometh into the world.  
<sup>(10)</sup> He was in the world,  
 and the world was made

xix. 1--3). It was at Ephesus that this Gospel was written, and the existence of a body of such "disciples" may have led to the full statement in this verse made by one who had himself been among the Baptist's earliest followers.

It was otherwise with the disciple who wrote these words. He is content to claim for his master as for himself the noblest human work, "to bear witness of that Light." No one may add to it; all may, in word and life, bear witness to it. Every discovery in science and advance in truth is a removal of some cloud which hides it from men; every noble character is bearing it about; every conquest of sin is extending it. It has been stored in mines of deepest thought in all ages. The heedless pass over the surface unconscious of it. The world's benefactors are they who bring it forth to men as the light and warmth of the rays of the Sun of Righteousness. (Comp. chap. v. 35, and Note there.)

<sup>(9)</sup> That was the true Light.—The right rendering of this verse is uncertain. It would, probably, give a better sense to translate it, *The true Light which lighteth every man was coming into the world*, i.e., was manifesting itself at the time when John was bearing witness and men were mistaking the lamp for the light. (Comp. chap. v. 35, Note.)

The true Light was not "true" as opposed to "false," but "true" as answering to the perfect

ideal, and as opposed to all more or less imperfect representations. The meaning of the Greek is quite clear. The difficulty arises from the fact that in English there is but one word to represent the two ideas. The word for the fuller meaning of "ideally true" is not confined to St. John, but is naturally of very frequent recurrence in his writings. The adjective is used nine times in this Gospel, and not at all in the other three. A comparison of the passages will show how important it is to get a right conception of what the word means, and will help to give it. (See chaps. iv. 23, 37; vi. 32; vii. 28; viii. 16; xv. 1; xvii. 3; xix. 35.) But, as ideally true, the Light was not subject to the changing conditions of time and space, but was and is true for all humanity, and "lighteth every man."

<sup>(10)</sup> In the world.—This manifestation in the flesh recalls the pre-incarnate existence during the whole history of the world, and the creative act itself. (Comp. verses 2 and 3, Note). The two facts are the constant presence of the true Light, and the creation of the world by Him. The world, then, in its highest creature man, with spiritual power for seeing the true Light, ought to have recognised Him. Spirit ought to have felt and known His presence. In this would have been the exercise of its true power and its highest good. But the world was sense-bound, and lost its spiritual perception, and "knew Him not."

by him,<sup>a</sup> and the world knew him not. <sup>(11)</sup> He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

<sup>a</sup> Heb. ii. 8.

<sup>1</sup> Or, the right, or privilege.

(12) But as many as received him, to them gave he power<sup>1</sup> to become the sons of God, even to them

This verse brings back again the thought of verses 3—5, to prepare for the deeper gloom which follows.

(11) He came, as distinct from the “was” of the previous verse, passes on to the historic advent; but as that was but the more distinct act of which there had been foreshadowings in every appearance and revelation of God, these advents of the Old Testament are not excluded.

His own is neuter, and the same word which is used in chap. xix. 27, where it is rendered “his own home.” (Comp. chap. xvi. 32, margin, and Acts xxi. 6.) What then was the “home?” It is distinguished from the “world” of verse 10, and it cannot but be that the home of Jewish thought was the land, the city, the temple bound up with every Messianic hope. Traces of this abound in the Jewish Scriptures. Comp. especially Mal. iii. 1, “The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple.” (See also Luke ii. 49.)

His own in the second clause is masculine—the dwellers in His own home, who were His own people, the special objects of His love and care. (See Ex. xix. 5; Deut. vii. 6; Ps. cxxxv. 4; Isa. xxxi. 9; Eph. ii. 19; Tit. ii. 14.) We turn from the coldness of a strange world to the warmth and welcome of a loving home. The world knew Him not, and He came to His own, and they despised Him!

Received him not is stronger

than “knew him not” of verse 10. It is the rejection of those for whom no plea of ignorance can be urged, of those “who see, and therefore their sin remaineth” (chap. ix. 41).

There has been an increasing depth in the tone of sadness which cannot now grow deeper. As the revelation has become clearer, as the moral power and responsibility of acceptance has been stronger, the rejection has passed into wilful refusal. The darkness comprehended not; the world knew not; His own received not.

(12) Yet the light ever shineth, and the better things lie hidden.

As many as received him.—The words are less wide and yet more wide than “His own.” The nation as such rejected Him; individuals in it accepted Him; but not individuals of that nation only. All who according to their light and means accept Him, receive from Him an authority and in Him a moral power, which constitutes them members of the true home to which He came, and the true children of God. They receive in acceptance the right which others lost in rejection. (Comp. Rom. ix. —xi.) The word rendered “received” is not quite the same as the word so rendered in verse 11. The latter is the welcome which may be expected as due from His own home. This is the reception given without a claim.

To them that believe on his name repeats the width of the

that believe on his name :  
 (13) which were born, not  
 of blood, nor of the will  
 of the flesh, nor of the  
 will of man, but of God.  
 (14) And the Word was

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 1.  
16.

made flesh,<sup>a</sup> and dwelt  
 among us, (and we beheld  
 his glory, the glory as of  
 the only begotten of the  
 Father,) full of grace and  
 truth.

condition, and at the same time explains what receiving Him means. It seems natural to understand the "name" of the only name which meets us in this context, that is, of the *Logos* or Word, the representation of the will, character, nature of God. (See on verse 18.) To "believe on" is one of St. John's characteristic words of fuller meaning. To believe is to accept as true; "devils believe and tremble" (Jas. ii. 19). To believe in is to trust in, confide in. To believe on, has the idea of motion to and rest upon; it is here the going forth of the soul upon, and its rest upon, the firm basis of the eternal love of the eternal Spirit revealed in the Word. (Comp. Pearson *On the Creed*, Art. 1, p. 16.)

(13) **Which were born.**—The result of receiving Him remains to be explained. How could they become "sons of God?" The word which has been used (verse 12) excludes the idea of adoption, and asserts the natural relation of child to father. The nation claimed this through its descent from Abraham. But they are Abraham's children who are of Abraham's faith. There is a higher generation, which is spiritual, while they thought only of the lower, which is physical. The condition is the submissive receptivity of the human spirit. The origin of life is "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

(14) **And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt.**—The reality of the moral power and change wrought in those that believed recalls and is itself evidence of the reality of that in which they believed. Man came to be a son of God, because the Son of God became man. They were not, as the Docetæ of that time said, believers in an appearance. "The Word was made flesh." The term "flesh" expresses human nature as opposed to the divine, and material nature as opposed to the spiritual, and is for this reason used rather than "body," for there may be a purely spiritual body (see 1 Cor. xv. 40—44); and rather than "man," which is used in chaps. v. 27 and viii. 40, for of man the spiritual is the highest part. It is not the approach of the divine and human nature in the region of the spiritual which is common to both that strikes the writer with wonder, but that men should have power to become sons of God, and that the Word of whose glory he has spoken in the earlier verses, should become flesh. (Comp. Phil. ii. 6—8 ; 2 Cor. viii. 9.)

**Dwelt among us.**—The Greek word means "tabernacled," "sojourned" among us. It was, probably, suggested by the similarity of sound with "Shekhînah," a term frequently applied in the Targums or Chaldee Paraphrases, though the substantive nowhere occurs in the

(15) John bare witness of

him, and cried, saying, This

Old Testament itself, to the visible symbol of the divine Presence which appeared in the Tabernacle and the Temple. The Targums, moreover, frequently identify the Shekhinah with the "Memra" or Word. (Comp. *Excursus A.*) The thought, then, of this Presence brings back to the writer's mind the days and weeks and months they had spent with the Word who had pitched His tent among them. He had been among the first to follow Him, and of the last with Him. He had been of those who had seen the glory of the Transfiguration, who had entered with their Master into the chamber of death, who had been with Him in the garden of Gethsemane. His eye, more than that of any other, had pierced the veil and gazed upon the Presence within. And now the old man, looking forward to the unveiled Presence of the future, loves to think and tell of the past, that the Presence may be to others all it had been to him. He is conscious that the statement of this verse needs evidence of no common order; but this is present in the words and lives of men whose whole moral being declared it true, and the test is within the power of all. (Comp. especially 1 John i.)

**The glory.**—Comp. chaps. ii. 11 and xi. 4. There is probably a special reference here to the Transfiguration. (See Matt. xvii. 2, and comp. the testimony of another eye-witness in 2 Pet. i. 17.)

**As of the only begotten.**—Better, *as of an only begotten*—*i.e.*, glory such as is the attribute of an only begotten Son. The term, as applied to the person of our Lord,

is found only in St. John, verse 18: chap. iii. 16, 18; 1 Ep. iv. 9. It is used four times elsewhere in the New Testament, and always of the only child. (Luke vii. 12; viii. 42; ix. 38; Heb. xi. 17.) The close connection here with the word Father, and the contrast with the sonship by moral generation in verse 12, fixes the sense as the eternal generation of the Word, "the only begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds."

**Of the Father.**—The English does not fully express the meaning. It would be better to read, *from with the Father*. (Comp. chaps. vi. 46; vii. 29; xvi. 27.) The thought is of the glory witnessed on earth of the only begotten Son who had come from God.

**Full of grace and truth.**—These words do not refer to the "Father," or to "the glory," but to "the Word." The structure of the English sentence is ambiguous, but the meaning of the Greek words is quite clear. They represent a Hebrew formula, expressing a divine attribute, and the passage which is almost certainly present to the thought here is the revelation of the divine nature to Moses (Ex. xxxiv. 6. Comp. 2 Sam. ii. 6; Ps. xxv. 10; lvii. 10; lxxxix. 15). These witnesses, too, had seen God, not indeed in the mountain only, but as dwelling among them. Every word a ray of truth, and every act a beam of love, they thought of that life "as one with the divine Essence; of that glory" as of the only begotten of the Father. (Comp. verse 17.)

(15) John bare witness of

was he of whom I spake,  
He that cometh after me  
is preferred before me:

a Col. i. 19

for he was before me.  
<sup>(16)</sup> And of his fulness have  
all we received,<sup>a</sup> and grace

**him, and cried.**—Better, *John beareth witness of him, and crieth.* The latter verb is past in tense, but present in meaning. For the sense comp. Note on chap. vii. 37. The writer thinks of the testimony as ever present, ever forceful. Twice on successive days had he heard them from the lips of the Baptist; three times within a few verses does he himself record them. (Comp. verses 27 and 30.) They are among the words stamped on the heart in the crisis of life, and as fresh in the aged Apostle as they had been in the youthful inquirer. He remembers how he heard them, and from whom they came. That wondrous spiritual power in their midst which all men felt, whose witness men would have accepted had he declared that he was himself the Christ, uttered his witness then, and it holds good now. It is quoted here as closely bound up with the personal reminiscence of verse 14, and with the thought of verses 6 and 7.

<sup>(16)</sup> **And of his fulness.**—Not a continuance of the witness of John, but the words of the evangelist, and closely connected with verse 14. This is seen in the “all we,” and in “fulness” (“full”) and “grace,” which are key-words of both verses.

**Fulness** is a technical theological term, meeting us again in this sense in the Epistles to, as here in the Gospel from, the Asiatic Churches. (Comp. especially Col. i. 19; ii. 9; Eph. i. 23; iii. 19; iv. 13.) The exposition

belongs to the Notes on these passages. Here it means the plenitude of divine attributes, the “glory . . . full of grace and truth.” “Of,” or better, *out of* this fulness does each individual receive, and thus the ideal church becomes “His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all things in all.”

**Have all we received.**—Better, *we all received.* The point of time is the same as in verse 12, and the “we all” is co-extensive with “as many as.” The power to become children of God was part of the divine fulness which they received in receiving Him.

**And grace for grace.**—Perhaps, *even grace for grace* gives the meaning less doubtfully. The thought is, We all received of His fulness, and that which we received was grace for grace. The original faculty of reception was itself a free gift, and in the use of this grace there was given the greater power. The words mean “grace in exchange for, instead of, grace.” The fulness of the supply is constant; the power to receive increases with the use, or diminishes with the neglect, of that which we already have. “Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath” (Matt. xiii. 12). No truth is in precept or in parable of the Great Teacher more constant than this; no lesson is more brightly or more sadly illustrated in the lives of

for grace. <sup>(17)</sup> For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by

<sup>a</sup> 1 Tim.  
6. 16; 1  
John 4.  
12.

Jesus Christ. <sup>(18)</sup> No man hath seen God at any time;<sup>a</sup> the only begotten Son,

those who heard Him. What instances of its meaning must have crowded on the writer's mind in the nation, in the disciples, in the Twelve, and even in the differing power of perception in the inner circle of the Three! "All we received," but with what difference of fulness!

(17) The word "for" connects this verse by way of explanation with what has gone before. The Old Testament thought of grace and truth has been already present in verse 14. The fulness of these divine attributes has been beheld in the glory of the Word. The revelation of them, that is, the removing of the veil which hides the knowable, has been made dependent on the use of the already known. But this is the essence of Christianity as distinct from Judaism: of a spiritual religion developed from within as distinct from a formal religion imposed from without; of a religion of principles, and therefore true for all time and for all men, as distinct from a religion of works, based, indeed, on an eternal truth (the oneness and the righteousness of God), but still specially designed for a chosen people and for a period of preparation. The law was given (from without) by the human agency of Moses. The true grace and truth came into being by means of Jesus Christ. Therefore it is that we receive grace for grace; there being in Him an ever constant fulness of grace, and for the man who uses the grace thus

given an ever constant realisation of deeper truth. Note that here, when the divinity and humanity have both been dwelt upon, and in contrast to the historic Moses, the name Jesus Christ first appears. Is there, too, in this union of the human and divine names a reference to the union in Him of the faculty to receive and the truth to fulfil? St. Luke speaks of Him as "increasing in wisdom and stature, and in *favour* (grace) with God and man" (ii. 52).

(18) **No man hath seen God at any time.**—The full knowledge of truth is one with the revelation of God, but no man has ever had this full knowledge. The primary reference is still to Moses (comp. Ex. xxxiii. 20, 23), but the words hold good of every attempt to bridge from the human standpoint the gulf between man and God. "The world by wisdom knew not God" (1 Cor. i. 21); and systems which have resulted from attempts of the finite to grasp the Infinite, are but as the vision of a dream or the wild fancy of a wandering mind.

**The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father.**—The oneness of essence and of existence is made prominent by a natural figure, as necessary in Him who is to reveal the nature of God. The "is in" is probably to be explained of the return to, and presence with the Father after the Ascension.

Some of the oldest MSS. and other authorities read here, "Only

which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

(19) And this is the re-

A.D. 30.

cord of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?

begotten God, which is in the bosom of the Father." It will be convenient to group together the passages of this Gospel where there are important various readings in one Note. (See *Excursus B: Some Variations in the Text of St. John's Gospel.*)

**He hath declared him.**— "He," emphatically as distinct from all others, this being the chief office of the Word; *declared*, rather than "hath declared;" "Him" is not found in the original text, which means "He was interpreter," "He was expositor." The word was used technically of the interpretation of sacred rites and laws handed down by tradition. Plato, e.g., uses it of the Delphian Apollo, who is the "national expositor" (*Rep.* iv. 427): The verse is connected, by a likeness of Greek words too striking to be accidental, with the question of Jesus the son of Sirach asked some three centuries before, "Who hath seen Him that he might tell us?" (*Ecclus.* xlivi. 31). The answer to every such question, dimly thought or clearly asked, is that no man hath ever so known God as to be His interpreter; that the human conception of God as "terrible" and "great" and "marvellous" (*Ecclus.* xlivi. 29) is not that of His essential character; that the true conception is that of the loving Father in whose bosom is the only Son, and that this Son is the only true Word uttering to man the will and character and being of God.

[2. **Manifestation of Jesus. Varying Degrees of Acceptance** (chaps. i. 19—iv. 54).]

- (1) **THE WITNESS OF THE BAPTIST** (chap. i. 19—40):  
 (a) *To the messengers of the Sanhedrin* (verses 19—28);  
 (b) *At the appearance of Jesus* (verses 29—34);  
 (c) *To the two disciples* (verses 35—40).]

(19) The narrative is connected with the prologue by the record of John, which is common to both (verse 15), and opens therefore with "And."

**The Jews.**—This term, originally applied to the members of the tribe of Judah, was extended after the Captivity to the whole nation of which that tribe was the chief part. Used by St. John more than seventy times, it is to be understood generally of the representatives of the nation, and of the inhabitants of Judæa, and of these as opposed to the teaching and work of Christ. He was himself a Jew, but the true idea of Judaism had led him to the Messiah, and the old name is to him but as the husk that had been burst in the growth of life. It remains for them to whom the name was all, and who, trying to cramp life within rigid forms, had crushed out its power.

**Priests and Levites.**—The word "Levite" occurs only twice elsewhere in the New Testament—

<sup>(20)</sup> And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. <sup>(21)</sup> And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? <sup>1</sup> And he answered, No.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 3.  
<sup>3.</sup>  
<sup>1</sup> Or, a  
prophet.

<sup>(22)</sup> Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? <sup>(23)</sup> He said, <sup>a</sup> I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the

in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke x. 32), and in the description of Joses (Acts iv. 36). It is clear from such passages as 2 Chron. xxii. 7—9; xxxv. 3; Neh. viii. 7, that part of the function of the Levites was to give instruction in the Law, and it is probable that the “scribes” were often identical with them. We have, then, here two divisions of the Sanhedrin, as we have two in the frequent phrase of the other Evangelists, “scribes,” and “elders,” the scribes (Levites) being common to both, and the three divisions being priests, Levites (scribes), and elders (notables). (Comp. verse 24, and Matt. v. 20.)

From Jerusalem is to be taken with “sent,” not with “priests and Levites.” Emphasis is laid upon the fact that the work of John had excited so much attention that the Sanhedrin sent from Jerusalem to make an official inquiry. The judgment of the case of a false prophet is specially named in the Mishna as belonging to the council of the Seventy One. (Comp. Luke xxiii. 33.)

<sup>(20)</sup> Confessed, and denied not; but confessed.—Comp. for the style, Note on verse 3.

I am not.—The better reading places the pronoun in the most emphatic position: “It is not I who am the Messiah.” He understands their question, then, “Who

art thou?” as expressing the general expectation, “Is it thou who art the Messiah?”

<sup>(21)</sup> What then?—Not “What art thou then?” but expressing surprise at the answer, and passing on with impatience to the alternative, “Art thou Elias?” (Comp. on this and the following question, Deut. xviii. 15, 18; Isa. xl. *et seq.*; Mal. iv. 5; 2 Macc. ii. 1—8; Matt. xvi. 14.) The angel had announced that “he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias.” The Lord declared “Elias is come already” (Matt. xviii. 12, 13), and yet the Forerunner can assert that, in the literal sense in which they ask the question and would understand the answer, he is not Elias, still less “the prophet,” by which, whether thinking of the words of Moses or the fuller vision of Isaiah from which he immediately quotes, he would understand the Messiah Himself.

<sup>(22)</sup> That we may give an answer.—He has given the “No” to all the ideas they had formed of him. There is nothing left to them but to draw the definite statement from himself, or to return to their senders empty-handed.

<sup>(23)</sup> But he still gives the “No.” They think of his person and his work. He thinks of neither. His eye is fixed on the coming One. In

way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. <sup>(24)</sup> And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. <sup>(25)</sup> And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias,

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 3.  
11; Acts  
19. 4.

neither that prophet! <sup>(26)</sup> John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; <sup>(27)</sup> he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose

this presence his own personality has no existence. He is as a voice, not to be inquired about but heard. They are acting as men who ask questions about the messenger of a great king who is coming to them and is at hand, instead of hastening with every effort to make ready for him. (Comp. Matt. iii. 3.)

**(24) They which were sent.**—The best MSS. omit the relative, and the verse thus becomes, “And they had been sent from the Pharisees.” The statement is made to explain the question which follows, but it should be observed that in this Gospel, where the Sadducees are nowhere mentioned, the term “Pharisees” seems to be used almost in the sense of “Sanhedrin.” (Comp. chaps. iv. 1; viii. 3; xi. 46, 57.)

**(25) Why baptizest thou then?**--Baptism, which was certainly one of the initiatory rites of proselytes in the second or third century A.D., was probably so before the work of the Baptist. It is not baptism, therefore, which is strange to the questioners, but the fact that he places Jews and even Pharisees (Matt. iii. 7) in an analogous position to that of proselytes, and makes them to pass through a rite which marks them out as impure, and needing

to be cleansed before they enter “the kingdom of heaven.” By what authority does he these things? They had interpreted such passages as Ezek. xxxvi. 25 *et seq.* to mean that Baptism should be one of the marks of Messiah’s work. None less than the Christ, or Elias, or “the prophet” could enact a rite like this. John is assuming their power, and yet is not one of them.

**(26) I baptize with water.**—The passage of Ezekiel is probably present to the mind, with its contrast between water and spirit.

**(27) He it is... is preferred before me.**—Insertions made to harmonise the verse with verses 15 and 30. Omitting them we have, “He who cometh after me” as the subject of the verb “standeth,” and the whole sentence is, “He who cometh after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to unloose, standeth among you and ye know Him not.” This is the authority for baptism, the outer sign of the Messiah’s Advent, for He is already standing in their midst. Here is the answer to their question. John’s work is simply ministerial. The baptism of the Spirit is at hand. The coming One has come. (Comp. Matt. iii. 11 and Mark i. 7.)

shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. <sup>(28)</sup> These things were done in

Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

(28) **Bethabara** beyond Jordan should be, *Bethany beyond Jordan*. Origen found "Bethany" in "almost all the copies," but not being able to find the place, he came to the conclusion that it must be Bethabara which he heard of, with a local tradition that John had baptised there; and in this he is followed by the Fathers generally. In support of this the etymology of Bethabara (= "ford-house") is compared with a possible meaning of Bethany (= "ship-house"), and the two are regarded as popular names of some well-known ford, one of which gradually ceased to be known as the name of this place, because it became appropriated as a name of the Bethany made prominent in the closing scenes of our Lord's life. On the other hand, it is believed that this argument from etymology is at least precarious; that ignorance of the place after three hundred years—and these years of war and unsettlement—is not unnatural; that the tradition in favour of Bethabara, which was then a favourite place for baptism, is one likely to have grown with this fact; and that we are not justified in adopting the critical decision of Origen, who rejected the almost unanimous evidence of MSS. in favour of this tradition at second hand. We are, moreover, ignorant of the site of Bethabara, and the identification with either Bethbarah (*Judg. vii. 24*), or Bethnimrah (*Num. xxxii. 36*; *Josh. xiii. 27*), which in some readings of the LXX. had taken the forms *Bethabra*

and *Betharaba*, gives a position much too far to the south, for the writer is clearly speaking of a place within easy approach of Galilee (verse 43 and chap. ii. 1), and he is careful to note the succession of days and even hours. It is not inconsistent with this that the narrative in *Matt. iii. 5* and *Mark i. 5* seems to require a place of easy access from Jerusalem, for the positions are not necessarily the same, and the account there is of a general impression, while here we have the minute details of an eyewitness. Himself a disciple of John, he remembers the place where he was then dwelling and baptising, and he knows that this Bethany is "beyond Jordan," just as he knows that the other is "the town of Mary and her sister Martha" (chap. xi. 1), and that it "was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off" (chap. xi. 18). Dr. Caspari believes that a "Bethany" answering the demands of the context is to be found in the village *Tellaniye* or *Tellanihje*, which is in the Jolan to the north of the Sea of Galilee (comp. chap. x. 40). It is near a ford of the Jordan, with several brooks intervening. The identity of name depends upon the frequent substitution by the Arabs of "Tell" (= "hill") for "Beth" (= "house"), so that the present word represents *Beth-anije*, or *Bethany*. Dr. Caspari's statement is now accessible to the English reader. Few, perhaps, will fully accept the author's opinion, "With regard to the accuracy of our con-

(29) The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto

him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which

clusion respecting the site, there can, therefore, be no doubt" (*Chron. and Geogr., Introd.*, p. 93), but it is based upon a reading of which there can be no doubt, and is, at least, a probable interpretation.

We have in these verses also a note of time. John now knows the Messiah, though others do not. This inquiry of the legates from Jerusalem was, therefore, after the baptism of our Lord (verses 31, 33), and if so, after the Temptation also. (See Matt. iv. 1.)

(29) **The next day.**—We pass on to the witness of John on the second day, when he sees Jesus coming unto him, probably on the return from the Temptation. Forty days had passed since they met before, and since John knew at the baptism that Jesus was the Messiah. These days were for the One a period of loneliness, temptation, and victory. They must have been for the other a time of quickened energy, wondering thought, and earnest study of what the prophets foretold the Messianic advent should be. Prominent among those prophecies which every Rabbi of that day interpreted of the Messiah, was Isa. lii. 13; liii. 12. We know that on the previous day the fortieth chapter is quoted (verse 23), and that this prophet is therefore in the speaker's thoughts. Side by side with these thoughts was the daily continuing tale of grief and sorrow and sin from those who came to be baptised. How often must there have come to the mind such words as, "He hath borne our griefs and carried

our sorrows," "He was wounded for our transgressions," "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter," "He bare the sin of many"! The Messiah, then, was the servant of Jehovah, the true Paschal Lamb of Isaiah's thought. While the heart burns with this living truth that all men needed, and that one heart only knew, that same Form is seen advancing. It bears indeed no halo of glory, but it bears marks of the agonising contest and yet the calm of accomplished victory. "He hath no form nor comeliness," "no beauty that we should desire Him." John looks at Him as He is coming, sees there living, walking in their midst, the bearer of the world's sin and sorrow; and utters words than which in depth and width of meaning none more full have ever come from human lips, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

The margin gives "beareth" as an alternative rendering for "taketh away," and this union exactly expresses the force of the original. He is ever taking away sin, but this He does by bearing the burden Himself. (Comp. 1 John iii. 5.) A reference to the words of Isaiah, as above, fully establishes this. The Baptist probably used the very word of the prophet; but the Evangelist does not, in recording this for Greek readers, use the word of the LXX. as St. Peter does (1 Pet. ii. 24, "bare our sin in His own body"), but re-translates, and chooses the wider word which includes both meanings.

taketh<sup>1</sup> away the sin of<sup>1 or, beareth.</sup> the world. <sup>(30)</sup> This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. <sup>(31)</sup> And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. <sup>(32)</sup> And John bare record,<sup>a</sup> saying,

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 3.  
16.

I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. <sup>(33)</sup> And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the

<sup>(30)</sup> **This is he.**—These words meet us here for the third time. They come in verse 15, and in part in verse 27. Here, as before, they are a quotation of an earlier and unrecorded statement of the Baptist, uttered in proverbial form, and to be understood in their fulfilment. (Comp. chap. iii. 30.)

<sup>(31)</sup> **And I knew him not.**—Better, *and I also knew Him not*; so again in verse 33. The reference is to “whom ye know not” of verse 26, and the assertion is not, therefore, inconsistent with the fact that John did know Him on His approach to baptism (Matt. iii. 13). In the sense that they did not know Him standing among them, he did not know Him, though with the incidents of His birth and earlier years and even features he must have been familiar. It cannot be that the Son of Mary was unknown to the son of Elizabeth, though One had dwelt in Nazareth and the other “was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel” (Luke i. 80; ii. 51). He knew not all, but there must have been many wondering thoughts of that

wondrous life. Could it be the life that all looked for? but no; there was little of the Jewish idea of the Messiah in the carpenter of a country village (comp. Mark vi. 3). What he did know was, that his own work as herald declared “that He should be made manifest to Israel,” and in that conviction he proclaimed the coming King, and began the Messianic baptism. The Person would be His own witness. Heaven would give its own sign to those who could spiritually read it. The Baptiser with the Spirit would Himself be so fully baptised with the Spirit, coming upon and dwelling in Him, that to the spiritual eye it would take visual form and be seen “as a dove descending from heaven.”

**Am I come.**—Better, *came*.

<sup>(32, 33)</sup> In these verses the Evangelist again makes prominent the solemn witness of John, giving the process by which conviction had come to his own mind.

<sup>(32)</sup> **I saw.**—Better, *I have seen*, or *beheld*. The vision is in its result ever present, and is all-conclusive evidence. (Comp. the

Holy Ghost. <sup>(34)</sup> And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

<sup>(35)</sup> Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples ; <sup>(36)</sup> and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God ! <sup>(37)</sup> And

the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. <sup>(38)</sup> Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye ? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) |

words in their historic setting, Matt. iii. 16.)

<sup>(34)</sup> **And I saw and bare record.**—Better, *and I have seen and have borne witness*, as in verse 32. The result of personal conviction was, that he forthwith testified to others, and continued to do so until the present. One of the sayings taught to his scholars was, “He was (existed) before me.” The revelation of the baptism and the voice heard from heaven (Matt. iii. 17) has given to this its true meaning. Teacher has now learnt, and learner is now taught, that Jesus is this pre-existent Being, the Messiah, the Son of God.

<sup>(35)</sup> **Again the next day after John stood.**—Better, *The next day again John was standing.* The description is of a scene present to the mind, and by one of the two disciples (verse 40). The “again” refers to verse 29.

**Two of his disciples.**—There is no reason for thinking that these were absent on the previous day, and that the testimony is specially repeated for them. Rather it is that, in that band of disciples too, there is an inner circle of those who, because they can receive more, are taught more. They had heard the words before, it may be had talked together about them, at

least in individual thought had tried to follow them, and now they have come to the Teacher again. Can we doubt what questions fill the heart or shape themselves in word ? He had passed through their struggle from darkness into light. There is a Presence with them which he now knows, and before which his own work must cease. The passing voice is no longer needed now that the abiding Word has come. Can we doubt what his answer is ?

<sup>(36)</sup> **And looking upon.**—Better, *and he looked upon Jesus as He was walking, and saith.* The word “looked upon” expresses a fixed, earnest gaze. (Comp. verse 42 ; Matt. xix. 26 ; Mark x. 21, 27 ; &c.) At this look, all the old thoughts in their fulness come crowding back. Yes. It is He. “Behold the Lamb of God !”

<sup>(37)</sup> The disciples understand the words as the teacher meant them. There is no word cutting the link between himself and them ; that would have been hard to speak, hard to hear. There is no word bidding them follow Jesus ; that cannot be needed.

<sup>(38)</sup> **Jesus turned, and saw them following.**—They follow wishing, and yet not daring, to question Him. He sees this, and

where dwellest<sup>1</sup> thou ? |<sup>1</sup> or  
 (39) He saith unto them,  
 Come and see. They came  
 and saw where he dwelt,  
 and abode with him that  
 day : for it was about the  
 tenth hour.<sup>2</sup> (40) One of  
 the two which heard John

<sup>2</sup> That  
was two  
hours  
before  
night.

speak, and followed him,  
 was Andrew, Simon Peter's  
 brother.

(41) He first findeth his  
 own brother Simon, and  
 saith unto him, We have  
 found the Messias, which  
 is, being interpreted, the

seeks to draw them forth by Himself asking the first question. They are not prepared for this question, and wish for more than a passing interview. They inquire, "Where dost thou sojourn?" "Where are you staying for the night?" They will visit Him and ask the many things they seek. They address Him as "Rabbi," placing themselves in the position of His scholars; but they have not yet learnt all that John had taught them of His office. The title is natural from them, for it was the then current title of a revered teacher, and one that John's disciples applied to him (chap. iii. 26); but the writer remembers it was a modern word (comp. Matt. xxiii. 7, 8), known to Jews only since the days of Hillel (president of the Sanhedrin about B.C. 30), not likely to be known to Greeks at all, and he therefore translates it, as he does Messias and Cephas in this same section.

(39) **Come and see.**—They think of a visit later, it may be, on the following day. He bids them come at once. We know not where. We have no hint of any words spoken. It was the sacred turning-point of the writer's own life, and its incidents are fixed in a depth of thought and feeling that no human eye may penetrate. But

he remembers the very hour. It was as we should say four o'clock in the afternoon (see margin), for there is no sufficient reason for thinking that the Babylonian method of counting the hours, usual at Ephesus as at Jerusalem, is departed from in this Gospel.

(40) **One of the two.**—The Evangelist will even here draw the veil over his own identity (see *Introduction*). The one is Andrew, even now marked out as brother of the better-known Simon Peter. On these names comp. Matt. x. 2—4; but it should be observed here, that on this first day, as the earnest of the harvest to come, we have the two pairs of brothers, the sons of Zebedee (comp. next verse), and sons of Jonas, who are ever leaders in the apostolic band.

[(2) JESUS MANIFESTS HIMSELF TO INDIVIDUALS (chaps. i. 41—ii. 11):

- (a) *To the first disciples—the witness of man (verses 41—51);*
- (b) *At Cana of Galilee—the witness of nature (chap. ii. 1—11).]*

(41) **He first findeth his own brother.**—The probable explanation of this verse, and the only one which gives an adequate meaning to "first" and "his own," is

Christ.<sup>1</sup> (42) And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called

<sup>1</sup> Or, the Anoint-ed.  
<sup>2</sup> Or, Peter.

Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.<sup>2</sup> (43) The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth

that each of the two disciples in the fulness of his fresh joy went to seek his own brother, that Andrew found Peter first, and that John records this, and by the form in which he does so implies, but does not state, that he himself found James. To have stated this would have been to break through the personal reserve which he imposed upon himself. (Comp. Matt. iv. 18—21; Mark i. 16—19; Luke v. 1—10.)

**We have found.**—Implying a previous seeking, and that both were under the impulse of the general movement which was leading men to expect the Messiah. It is implied, too, that Simon was near, and therefore probably a hearer of the Baptist.

**Messias.**—The Hebrew form of the name occurs in the New Testament only here and in chap. iv. 25, in both cases in a vivid picture of events fixed in the memory. Elsewhere, John, as the other sacred writers, uses the LXX. translation, “Christ,” and even here he adds it (comp., e.g., in this chap. verses 20 and 25). Both words mean “anointed” (see margin, and comp. Ps. xlvi. 8).

(42) **Beheld.**—See Note on verse 29.

**A Stone.**—Better, *Peter*, as in margin. The word means a stone, but the writer translated for Greek, not for English readers. The rule of the previous verse, which places the Greek word in the text and the

English word in the margin, should be followed here.

**Cephas.**—The word occurs only in this place in the Gospels, elsewhere in the New Testament only in St. Paul (1 Cor. and Gal.). Remembering the general significance of Hebrew names, the changes in the Old Testament, as of Abram, Sarai, and Jacob, and among these first disciples, as of James and John (Mark iii. 16, 18), all these names of Peter seem meant to characterise the man,—“Thou art now Hearer, the Son of Jehovah’s Grace; thou shalt be called and be a Rock-man.” (Comp. Matt. xvi. 17.)

(43) **The day following**, that is, the fourth day from the inquiry by the Sanhedrin (see verses 29, 35, 43).

**Findeth Philip.**—Just as he was going forth from his lodging of the previous night (verse 40). Philip is mentioned in the other Gospels only in the lists of the Twelve. The touches of character are all found in St. John. (Comp. chaps. vi. 5; xii. 21; xiv. 3.)

**Follow me.**—This command, so full of meaning, is never used in the Gospels except as spoken by our Lord Himself, and is addressed to but one outside the circle of the Apostles, the rich young man whom Jesus loved (Matt. xix. 21; Mark x. 21). In other parts of the New Testament it is used but once, in the words of the angel to Peter (Acts xii. 8). We cannot, there-

Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. <sup>(44)</sup> Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. <sup>(45)</sup> Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith un-

<sup>a</sup> Gen. 49  
10;  
<sup>b</sup> Deut.  
18. 18.  
<sup>c</sup> Isa. 4. 2.

to him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law,<sup>a</sup> and the prophets,<sup>b</sup> did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. <sup>(46)</sup> And Natha-

fore, limit the words to an invitation to accompany Him on that day's walk, though this is included, and in that walk from Bethania to Bethsaida there came the revelation which made the "Follow Me" a power binding for the whole of life. (Comp. Matt. viii. 22.)

(44) Of (or rather, *from*) Bethsaida, is added as one of the minute touches of local knowledge which give to this Gospel the colour and vividness that an eyewitness only could impart. It explains the meeting. Philip was going home, and Bethsaida was on the way which Jesus would naturally take from Bethania to Cana (chap. ii. 1, 2). It explains, too, the process by which Philip passed from Messianic hope to a full belief in the Christ. He was a fellow-townsman of Andrew and Peter. These two had talked together of ancient prophecy and future expectation. One had announced to the other in striking language, "We have *found* the Messias," and it is with the same word that Philip tells the good news to Nathanael. This "Bethsaida of Galilee," as it is called in describing Philip in chap. xii. 21, is thus distinguished from the Bethsaida Julias, which was on the eastern side of the lake. (See Jos. *Ant.* xviii. 2, § 1, and comp. Luke ix. 10.)

(45) Philip findeth Nathanael.—See verses 41 and 44. Nathanael is the Hebrew of the

Greek word Theodorus, God's gift. The former is found in Num. i. 8; 1 Chron. ii. 14. The latter is preserved in the names Theodore and Dorothea. He belonged to the town to which Jesus was going (Cana of Galilee, chap. xxi. 2). Philip then probably went with Jesus and found Nathanael at or near Cana (verse 48). He is, perhaps, the same person as Bartholomew; but on this, see chap. xxi. 2, and comp. Matt. x. 3. The more formal statement of the proof in this case, as compared with that of the two brothers (verse 41), agrees with the general character of Philip, and with the less close relationship.

Of Nazareth.—Better, *from* Nazareth. Nothing can be argued from these words, or those which follow, as to ignorance of the fact of, or the events attending, the birth at Bethlehem. It is to be noted that the words are Philip's, not the writer's. Very possibly, one who had been in the company of Jesus for a few hours only was then unacquainted with these incidents. In any case he expresses the common belief of the neighbourhood at the time, and it is an instance of St. John's dramatic accuracy that he gives the words as they were spoken, and does not attempt to interpret them by later events, or by his own knowledge. (Comp. chaps. vii. 42, 52; viii. 53, &c.)

(46) Can there any good

nael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. <sup>(47)</sup> Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an

Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! <sup>(48)</sup> Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast

thing . . . ? The question is not, "Can the Messiah come out of Nazareth?" but "Can there any good thing come?" The question is asked by an inhabitant of a neighbouring village who looks upon the familiar town with something of local jealousy and scorn; but the form of the question would seem to point to an ill repute in reference to its people. The place is unknown to earlier history, and is not mentioned even in Josephus; but what we find in Mark vi. 6 and Luke iv. 29 agrees with Nathanael's opinion. The name (derived probably from the Hebrew *Netzer*, a branch) is preserved in the modern En-násirah, two miles to the north of the plain of Esdraelon, and six miles west of Tabor.

Come and see expresses the fulness of his own conviction. An interview had brought certainty to his own mind. It would do so likewise to that of his friend.

<sup>(47)</sup> Jesus saw Nathanael coming.—Nathanael is at once willing that his prejudice should give way before the force of truth. He is coming, when the look directed towards others rests also upon him. It finds the character which it tests earnest and honest. What gave rise to the form in which this is expressed is not stated. There is clearly some unexpressed link with the history of Jacob.

The word for "guile" is the same word as the LXX. word for "subtlety" in Gen. xxvii. 35. The thought then is, "Behold one who is true to the name of Israel, and in whom there is nothing of the Jacob" (Gen. xxvii. 36). There is something in the words which comes as a revelation to Nathanael. Were they a proof that the Presence before whom he stood read to the very depths of his own thought? Under the shade of a tree, where Jews were accustomed to retire for meditation and prayer, had the Old Testament history of Jacob been present to his mind? Was he too "left alone," and did he "prevail with God?" And does he now hear the inmost thought expressed in words, carrying certainty to his soul, and giving him, too, the victory of seeing God "face to face with life preserved?" (Gen. xxxii. 30).

<sup>(48)</sup> Before that Philip called thee.—The natural explanation of the verse seems to be that Nathanael was at his own house when Philip called him to hear the glad news of the Messiah. The words rendered "under the fig-tree" include the going there and being there. It was the fig-tree of his own garden (1 Kings iv. 25; Mic. iv.; Zec. iii. 10) where, and not at the corners of the streets, or to be seen of men, he was in the honesty

under the fig tree, I saw thee. (49) Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God ; thou art the King of Israel. (50) Jesus answered and said unto him, Be-

cause I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou ? thou shalt see greater things than these. (51) And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Here-

of his heart praying to God. Unseen as he thought by any eye, he was seen by Him to whose coming every true Israelite looked, and the answer to the true thought and prayer was then as ever close at hand ; but at hand in the human form in which men find it so hard to read the Divine, and in the ordinary events in which men find it hard to realise God. A travelling Rabbi ! He is the Messiah. From Nazareth the All Good cometh ! This meeting, then, was not the first. There was an actual Messianic Presence in Nathanael's inmost thought. He is now startled, and asks, " Whence knowest Thou me ? " We have never seen each other before. But in the deepest sense, the Messiah was there ; " when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee. "

(49) **Thou art the Son of God.** —The recognition begets recognition. That strange Presence he had felt as a spiritual power quickening hope and thought, making prophets' words living truths, filling with a true meaning the current beliefs about the Messiah ;—yes ; it goes through and through him again now. It is there before him. " Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God ; Thou art the King of Israel." (For these titles as existing in the Messianic expectation of the day, comp. chaps. xi. 27 ; xii. 13, 15 ; Matt.

xxv. 63 ; Mark iii. 11 ; v. 7. See also the quotation from Zech. in Matt. xxi. 5.)

(50) **Believest thou.**—This is not necessarily a question, and a fuller sense is obtained by taking it as an assertion. (Comp. the same word in chaps. xv. 31, and xx. 29.) On this evidence *thou believest* ; the use of the faith-faculty strengthens it ; thou shalt see greater things than these.

(51) **Verily, verily.**—This is the first use of this formula of doubled words, which is not found in the New Testament outside St. John's Gospel. They are always spoken by our Lord, and connected with some deeper truth, to which they direct attention. They represent, in a reduplicated form, the Hebrew "Amen," which is common in the Old Testament as an adverb, and twice occurs doubled (Num. v. 22 ; Nch. viii. 6). In the Hebraic style of the Apocalypse the word is a proper name of "the faithful and true witness" (Rev iii. 14).

**I say unto you . . . ye shall see.**—The earlier words have been addressed to Nathanael. The truth expressed in these holds for all disciples, and is spoken to all who were then present—to Andrew and John and Peter and James (verse 41) and Philip, as well as to Nathanael.

**Hereafter is omitted by several**

after ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God

ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

ancient authorities, including the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS., but there is early evidence for the insertion, and as the omission removes a difficulty in the interpretation, it is probably to be traced to this source. If retained, the better rendering is, *henceforth, from this time onwards.*

**Heaven opened.**—More exactly, *the heaven opened*, made and continuing open. The thought was familiar, for Psalmist and Prophet had uttered it to God in the prayers, “Bow Thy heavens, O Lord, and come down” (Ps. cxliv. 5); “O that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down” (Isa. lxiv. 6). The Presence then before Nathanael was the answer to these longings of the soul.

**The angels of God ascending and descending.**—Referring again to the history of Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 12, 13).

**The Son of man.**—This is probably the first time that this phrase, which became the ordinary title used by our Lord of Himself, fell from His lips; but it meets us more than seventy times in the earlier Gospels, occurring first in Matt. viii. 20. It will be enough to observe here that it is suggested by, and is in part opposed to and in part the complement of, the titles used by Nathanael. He could clothe the Messianic idea only in Jewish titles, “Son of God,” “King of Israel.” The true expression of the idea was not Hebrew, but human, “the Son of Man,” “the Word made flesh;” *the Son, the true representative of*

the race, the Second Adam, in whom all are made alive; the Son of *Man*. The word is Ἰησοῦς, not ἄνθρωπος; *homo*, not *vir*. It is man as man; not Jew as holier than Greek; not free-man as nobler than bond-man; not man as distinct from woman; but humanity in all space and time and circumstance; in its weakness as in its strength; in its sorrows as in its joys; in its death as in its life. And here lies the explanation of the whole verse. The ladder from earth to heaven is in the truth “The Word was made flesh.” In that great truth heaven was, and has remained, opened. From that time onwards messengers were ever going backward and forward between humanity and its God. The cry of every erring and helpless child to its Father for guidance and strength; the silent appeal of the wronged and down-trodden to the All-Just Avenger; the fears and hopes of the soul burdened by the unbearable weight of sin, and casting itself on the mercy of the Eternal Love—all these are borne by messengers who always behold the face of God (Matt. xviii. 10). And every light that falls upon the path, and strength that nerves the moral frame; every comfort to the heart smarting beneath its wrong; every sense of forgiveness, atonement, peace—all these like angels descend that ladder coming from heaven to earth. Ascending precedes descending, as in the vision of old. Heaven’s messengers are ever ready to descend, when earth’s will bid them come. The revelation of the fullest truth of God is never wanting to

CHAPTER II.—<sup>(1)</sup> And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: <sup>(2)</sup> and both

A.D. 30.

Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

<sup>(3)</sup> And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have

the heart that is open to receive it. The ladder is set up upon the earth, but it reaches to heaven, and the Lord stands above it. It goes down to the very depths of man's weakness, wretchedness, and sin; and he may lay hold of it, and step by step ascend it. In the Incarnation, Divinity took human form on earth; in the Ascension, Humanity was raised to heaven.

## II.

<sup>(1)</sup> The third day—i.e., from the last note of time in chap. i. 43, giving one clear day between the call of Philip and the day of the marriage.

Cana of Galilee has been identified with both *Kānet el-Jelil*, or *Khurbet Kānet*, and *Kefr Kenna*. The monks of Nazareth and local tradition claim the latter place as the scene of the miracle, but this tradition has not been traced earlier than the seventeenth century, and the best modern authorities do not accept it. (But comp. in support of Kefr Kenna, Zeller in *Report of Palestine Exploration Fund*, iii., 1869.) *Kānet el-Jelil*, on the other hand, is the rendering of the Arabic version, and Sæwulf, as early as A.D. 1103, describes it as the place "where the Lord turned water into wine at the wedding" (*Early Travels in Palestine*, p. 47). The strength of the argument is in the identity of name in the original, whereas *Kenna* is quite distinct. Travellers describe it as an obscure,

uninhabited village in ruins. They were formerly shown the house where the marriage took place here, and even the water-pots, but these are now shown at the rival Kefr Kenna. The ruins are on the side of a hill, looking over the plain of *El Buttauf*, rather more than six miles to the N. or N.E. of Nazareth, and so answering Sæwulf's description. It is some fifteen or sixteen miles from Tiberias and Capernaum, and six or seven more from Tell-Anihje. (Comp. chap. i. 28.) The writer knows the place by its common name Cana of Galilee, by which it was distinguished from the Cana of the tribe of Asher, S.E. from Tyre (Josh. xix. 28). The mother of Jesus was already there, as a relative or friend, assisting in the preparations.

<sup>(2)</sup> Was called, or invited, after His arrival in Cana; but we may still think of Him, in whom purpose and result were one, as coming to Cana for the marriage. Nathanael would have known of it, and was perhaps also connected with one of the families. It is quite in accord with Eastern hospitality that the disciples, who are now spoken of under this collective title, and formed with their Rabbi a band of seven, should be bidden with Him.

<sup>(3)</sup> When they wanted wine.—Better, *the wine having failed*.

They have no wine.—The question, "What was the import of

no wine. <sup>(4)</sup> Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what

have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

this remark?" has been often asked, and very variously answered. And yet the answer does not seem far to seek. The next verses fix its meaning, as the expectation of an outcome of supernatural power. This is quite in harmony with the mother's hopes and musings, without any previous miracle on which to base them (verse 11). For many long years she had kept in her heart the Son's words and deeds (Luke ii. 51). She must have heard of John the Baptist's witness, of the events of the Baptism six weeks now past, and on that very day every hope must have started into new life, as she heard from those who came with Him how conviction had seized upon their own minds. To cause the increase of meal, and prevent the failure of the cruse of oil (1 Kings xvii. 14), was within the power of the prophet whom they expected as herald of the Messiah. Here was an unexpected need, caused, it may be, by the presence of Himself and followers at that festival. Can He not, will He not, supply the need, and prove Himself indeed the Christ?

(4) **Woman, what have I to do with thee?**—This is an old battle-ground between Protestant and Romanist expositors. The former have found in each clause of the sentence a condemnation of Mariolatry; the latter have sought explanations not inconsistent with their faith and practice. It may be hoped that the day is now past, when anything other than thoughts of reverence and honour is to be connected with the title "Woman,"

least of all in the words of One who claimed as His own highest dignity Sonship of, identity with, humanity; and who was here addressing the mother to whom He had been subject, and from whom His own humanity had been derived. Were proof needed of the tenderness which underlies the word as used by Him, it would be found in the other instances which the Gospels supply. It is spoken only to the Syro-Phoenician whose faith is great (Matt. xv. 28); to the daughter of Abraham loosed from her infirmity (Luke xiii. 12); and, in this Gospel, to the Samaritan embracing the higher faith (chap. iv. 21); perhaps to the sinner whom He does not condemn (chap. viii. 10); to the same mother from the cross (chap. xix. 26); and to Mary Magdalene in tears (chap. xx. 13, 15).

Still the second part of the sentence declares beyond all doubt that the two regarded His life-work from stand-points so different that there is nothing common between them. It is literally, *What is there to me and to thee?*—i.e., what is there common to us both in this matter, in regard of which we stand on an equal footing. The parallels for the form of the question are Josh. xx. 24; Judg. xi. 12; 1 Sam. xvi. 10; 1 Kings xvii. 18; 2 Kings iii. 13; and the thrice-recorded question of the demoniac (Matt. viii. 29; Mark i. 24; Luke viii. 28). The real parallel is in this Gospel in chap. vii. 6. Mother and brethren alike regarded life in its events; for Him it is an unchanging principle. For them, action is determined by the outer

<sup>(5)</sup> His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.  
<sup>(6)</sup> And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of

the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. <sup>(7)</sup> Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the

stimulus; for Him, by the eternal will of the Father. Their hour is always ready; His is the development of a law. His answer is another form of that question kept in her heart: "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" but "they understood not the saying which He spake unto them" (Luke ii. 49).

**Mine hour is not yet come**—i.e., the hour for My being openly manifested as the Messiah. (Comp. especially verse 16; chaps. viii. 20; xii. 23; xvii. 1.)

<sup>(5)</sup> **Whatsoever he saith unto you.**—His answer has not repelled her. She still believes and expects. Her command to the servants confirms the opinion that the marriage is of some member of the family. This opinion has taken strange traditional forms; one being that here, too, the Evangelist casts a veil over an incident in his own life, and that he was himself the bridegroom; but that, guided by the miracle, he from that moment left all and followed Christ. The Prologue to St. John attributed to Jerome says that "John, wishing to marry, was called from the wedding by our Lord" (Trench *On Miracles*, p. 98). See Matt. xix. 29 et seq., and Luke xiv. 26.

<sup>(6)</sup> **Waterpots**, or *pitchers*, like to but larger than the vessels used for carrying water, as in chap. iv. 28 These were placed in the

outer court, away from the guest-chamber, for the governor of the feast is ignorant of the circumstances (verse 9). It is natural that an eye-witness should remember the number and know roughly their size. There were six of them, containing about twenty gallons apiece; but hidden meanings referring to the number or the quantity are brought to the text, not derived from it. The measure rendered "firkin" is *metrētēs*, which is used for the Hebrew, "bath," in 2 Chron. iv. 5. This (Jos. *Ant.* viii. 2, § 9) gives nearly nine gallons as the value of the "firkin," which multiplied by two or three gives the contents of each pitcher as from about eighteen to twenty-seven gallons; or, approximately, from 100 to 150 gallons for the whole. Our own word "firkin" is probably "a little fourth," and equal to nine gallons, or the fourth of a barrel (comp. "tierce" which is one-third). It is used only here in the Bible.

<sup>(7)</sup> **Fill the waterpots.**—It is implied that the pitchers were wholly or in part empty, the water in them having been used for the ablutions before the feast. The persons ordered are the servants (verse 5). "Up to the brim" marks the willing care with which the order was obeyed, and an expectation through the household of some work to be wrought.

brim. <sup>(8)</sup> And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. <sup>(9)</sup> When the ruler of the

feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the

<sup>(8)</sup> **Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast.**—A vessel was let down into the pitcher, and was then carried to the ruler of the feast, who would distribute the wine in it to the guests. *Ruler* rather than “governor.” The same English word should be used throughout the two verses. What exact office is denoted by the Greek word is uncertain, as it occurs nowhere else in the Bible, and is very rare in the classical authors. The chief English commentators (Alford, Wordsworth, Trench) are agreed that he was chosen by the guests from among their own number, but this opinion has not commanded the general assent of scholars; and there seems more reason to think that the person intended is what we should call the “head-waiter,” whose duty it was to taste the viands and wines, to arrange the tables and couches, and to be generally responsible for the feast.

<sup>(9)</sup> **Water that was made wine.**—Better, *water that had become wine*. At what moment did the transformation take place? What water became wine? The text itself does not speak of “water now become wine” until the ruler of the feast tasted it, and immediately afterwards speaks of it as “water,” when the servants drew it, for the plain reference of the parenthesis in brackets is to the drawing of the water from the

pitchers (verse 8), not to a previous drawing of water to place in the pitchers, which has not been even hinted at. Unless, then, there is a strong reason which does not appear in these words, this simple meaning is the true one;—that the change took place during or after the drawing from the pitchers, and that that portion only was changed which was carried to the ruler and actually needed to supply the guests. The reason based upon the mention of the number and contents of the pitchers (verse 6) is certainly not a strong one. It is quite natural to find these stated in the picturesque style of this Gospel, and there is no care to give more than a rough estimate of the size from a remembrance either of these pitchers or of pitchers generally used for this purpose. There is more force in the general impression derived from verse 7. It may be fairly asked why was more water placed in readiness than was needed? But the pitchers would be in any case refilled for ablutions after the feast. They were at hand, meeting the eye. All possibility of collusion is thus excluded. They had been used not long before; they would very soon be used again. The filling of all leaves to the servants the choice of one or more from which to draw. There is an unfailing potential supply; it becomes an actual supply, only when needed and appropriated by human want. This, as every supernatural work,

governor of the feast called the bridegroom,<sup>(10)</sup> and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when

men have well drunk, then that which is worse: *but thou hast kept the good wine until now.*<sup>(11)</sup> This beginning of miracles did

is made to depend upon faith. There is no demand for this faith in filling water-pots with water; it is otherwise when they draw it, and bear it in the usual tankard to the ruler, in answer to the demand for wine. Here, as everywhere in divine action, there is an economy in the use of power. There is no miracle of "luxury" or "waste" or "excess." These cavils of the higher criticism are—like the additions of expositors, as that the feast lasted for a week or more, or their perversions, as that the wine was in no sense intoxicating—superstructures without a foundation.

(10) When men have well drunk.—The same Greek word is used in the LXX. in Gen. xlivi. 34, and rendered in the Authorised version "were merry;" but its general rule in the Old Testament, as in classical writers, and its invariable use in the New Testament (Matt. xxiv. 49; Acts ii. 15; 1 Cor. xi. 20; 1 Thess. v. 7; Rev. xvii. 6, are the only passages) is to express the state of drunkenness. Our translators have shrunk from that rendering here, though it was before them in the "When men be dronke," of Tyndall and Cranmer. The physical meaning of the word is to saturate with moisture, as we say, to be drenched, which is the same word as drunk. There is clearly no reference to the present feast. It is a coarse jest of the ruler's, the sort of remark that forms part of

the stock in trade of a hired manager of banquets.

(11) This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, or, more exactly, *This did Jesus in Cana of Galilee as the beginning of His signs.* The form of the sentence makes it certain that it is the absolutely first, and not the first in Cana, which is meant.

It is important to note here that St. John uses only once, and that in our Lord's test of the courtier, and connected with "sign" (chap. iv. 48), the word which represents "miracle," "wonder," "portent," and that he nowhere uses the word which represents "powers" or "mighty works." For him they are simply "works," and these "works" are "signs." He thinks of our Lord as the agent in all creation, and the source of all life (chap. i. 2, 3); but this being so, no display of power impresses him, and no wonder startles him. All is the natural "work" of the divine worker; but, like Himself, every work is also a word. It speaks to him who hath ears to hear. It is a "sign" to him who can spiritually interpret. That at His will water became wine is as natural as that, by that will, the rain passing through earth and vine and grape should become wine. From his point of view both are equally explicable; from any other, both are in ultimate analysis equally inexplicable. "Voici le vin qui trombe du ciel!" is the French peasant's

Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory ; and his disciples believed on him.

expression for the one (comp. Trench's note).

"The conscious water saw its God, and blushed."

"*Nympha pudica Deum vidit. et erubuit.*"]

is the English poet's expression for the other.

This gives the key, then, to the selection of "miracles" by St. John, and to their interpretation. He gives those which mark stages of fuller teachings. They are "signs" of a new revelation, and lead to a higher faith. What was the fuller teaching in this first sign ? The heart must seek to read it; words can only seek to guide. Would not those Jews remember the first miracle of Moses, and later, if not then, see here the contrast between the Law which came by Moses, and the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ (chap. i. 17) ? Would not those exact observers of traditional rites see a living principle growing out of the rite practised at every meal (comp. Mark vii. 3), and feel that it is the letter which killeth, it is the Spirit which giveth life ? Would not those who thought of Him as the Messianic King of Israel read in His presence at the festal tide of family life the meaning of the claim to be Son of Humanity ? Would not the followers of the hermit John learn that Christianity's message is not for the wilderness, but for the hearts of men ; and that its life is not one of seclusion from

(12) After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples:

the world, but of moral power in it (chap. xvii. 15) ? Would not those who had heard the Baptist's record, and had felt and uttered their own convictions, hear now the secret voice of Nature joining in the witness ? Some such thoughts as these came to them in a fulness of power they had not known before. It was to them as a new manifestation of His glory, and the disciples again believed.

The other signs recorded in this Gospel are, the Healing of the ruler's son (chap. iv. 46—54) ; and of the impotent man at Bethesda (chap. v. 1—9) ; the Feeding of the five thousand (chap. vi. 5—59) ; the Walking on the sea (chap. vi. 15—21) ; the Giving of sight to the man born blind (chap. ix. 1—7) ; the Raising of Lazarus (chap. xi.) ; the Draught of Fishes (chap. xxi. 1—8). See Notes on these passages, and on chap. xx. 30.

(3) JESUS MANIFESTS HIMSELF PUBLICLY (chaps. ii. 12—iv. 54) :

- (a) *In Jerusalem—the Temple* (chap. ii. 12—22) ;  
(b) *In Jerusalem—the city* (chaps. ii. 23—iii. 21) ;  
*Nicodemus :*

*The new birth* (verses 1—8) ;  
*Belief* (verses 9—15) ;  
*Judgment* (verses 16—21) ;

- (c) *In Judæa* (chap. iii. 22—36). *The Baptist.* ]

(12) After this he went down to Capernaum.—For the posi-

and they continued there not many days.

(<sup>13</sup>) And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, (<sup>14</sup>) and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and

the changers of money sitting: (<sup>15</sup>) and when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the

tion of Capernaum comp. Note on chap. vi. 59. The student should also consult the Notes on Matt. iv. 13, in this series of Commentaries. It was on the shore of the lake of Tiberias, and He must have gone "down" to it from any locality among the hills of Galilee. The words do not imply that they went to Capernaum direct from Cana. The "after this" allows of a return to Nazareth, and the mention of the "brethren" makes such a return probable. The place of this sojourn in the order of events belongs to the narrative of the earlier Gospels, and here, as elsewhere, questions which recur are treated when they are first mentioned. To deal with them on each occurrence would be to save the trouble of reference at the cost of much space; and this would be ill-saved; the spiritual profit arising from constant reference is one which no earnest student of the Gospels could desire to lose. He will wish to study every event in that life in every word which records it. (Comp. Matt. iv. 13 *et seq.*, and ix. 1; Mark iii. 21—31, and vi. 3; Luke iv. 16—30). For the "brethren of the Lord," see *Excursus C.*, p. 432.

(<sup>13</sup>) **And the passover, a feast of the Jews.**—Here, again, we are on common ground with

the earlier Gospels. They place a cleansing of the Temple at the close of our Lord's ministry at the only Passover which comes within the scope of their narrative. The subject is dealt with in Notes on Matt. xxi. 12 *et seq.*, and in the Chronological Harmony prefixed to the Notes on that Gospel. The careful reader will not fail to observe the graphic touches peculiar to this narrative — the money-changers *sitting*, the sacrificial animals, the making of the scourge, the money poured out, the order to remove the doves which could not be driven out. We feel all through in the presence of an eye-witness. It is worth remembering that on the eve of the Passover the head of every family carefully collected all the leaven in the house, and there was a general cleansing. He was doing in His Father's house, it may be, what was then being done in every house in Jerusalem. The remark will be seen to have an important bearing on the question of the repetition of the cleansing.

(<sup>15</sup>) **And the sheep, and the oxen.**—For this read, *both the sheep and the oxen*. The change is of only one word, but it gives it an entirely different sense. The driving out with the scourge was not of "all (men) and sheep and oxen," but of "all," *i.e.*, both sheep and oxen.

tables ; <sup>(16)</sup> and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence ; make

not my Father's house an house of merchandise. <sup>(17)</sup> And his disciples re-

**(16) My Father's house.**—Some among those present now (verse 18) may have been present in that same house when He, a lad of twelve years, was there at the Passover, and after questions and answers, higher and deeper than these doctors could grasp, claimed God as His true Father (Luke ii. 49). What that repeated claim meant now must have been clear to all. Their own messengers had brought them John's witness; later reports must have come before, and come with, the crowd of Galilean pilgrims; the disciples are themselves with Him (verse 17), and their hearts are too full for silence; but there was more than all this. Those expounders of the oracles of God who remembered that Elijah was to come before the day of the Lord, must have remembered, too, that the Lord was to come to this Temple, like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap (Mal. iii. 1-3; iv. 5). That fire was in their midst, and from that Presence buyers and sellers and changers shrunk back in awe, none daring to resist; that cleansing was then taking place, and the Son was claiming the sanctity and reverence due to His Father's house. He has before claimed to be Son of Man. The Messianic title is publicly claimed before the official representatives of the people at the great national festival, in the Temple, at Jerusalem. If, while this scene is fresh in our minds, we think again of the marriage at Cana, we shall feel how different the mani-

festations are, and that this latter was not, and was not intended to be, a public declaration of His person and work. Now we understand what seemed hard before, that the assertion "Mine hour is not yet come" (verse 4) immediately precedes the first sign. This sign was at a family gathering known only to few, probably not to all who were there, for "the ruler knew not whence it was" (verse 9), and no effect is described as resulting from it, except that the little band of disciples believed (verse 11). The "forth," which in the English version seems to mark an effect upon others, is not found in the Greek. It is within the circle of the other Gospel narratives, but is included in none of them. It left no such impression in the mind of St. Peter as to lead him to include it in the Gospel of his interpreter, St. Mark, or upon Mary herself as to lead her to include it in the answers she must have given to the questions of St. Luke. It was, indeed, the first sign in Cana of Galilee, but the scene before us is the announcement to the world.

**(17) Was written . . . hath eaten me up.**—More literally, *is written . . . shall eat me up.* The verse is full of interest in many ways. It gives us the thought of the disciples at the time (comp. verse 22) which could be known only to one of their number. It shows us what we too seldom realise in reading the New Testament, that the Jewish mind was filled to overflowing with thoughts of the Old

membered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."

(18) Then answered the

a Ps. 69.9.

Jews and said unto him, What sign shonest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? (19) Jesus

Testament. The child was taught to say by heart large portions of the Law and Psalms and Prophets, and they formed the very texture of the mind, ready to pass into conscious thought whenever occasion suggested. With the exception of the 22nd Psalm, no part of the Old Testament is so frequently referred to in the New as the psalm from which these words are taken (lxix. 9), and yet that psalm could not have been in its historic meaning Messianic (see, e.g., verses 5, 22—26). This reference to it gives us, then, their method of interpretation. Every human life is typical. The persecution without reason, the wrong heaped upon the innocent, the appeal to and trust in Jehovah, the song of thanksgiving from him whose parched throat was weary of calling—all this was true of some representative sufferer of earlier days, and we may hear in it almost certainly the voice of Jeremiah; but it was true of him in that he was a forerunner of the representative sufferer. The darker features of the psalm belong to the individual; the Life which sustains in all, and the Light which illuminates in all, was even then in the world, though men knew Him not. The words of Jeremiah are Messianic, because his life—like every noble, self-forgetting, others' sorrow bearing, man and God loving, life—was itself Messianic.

The change of tense, from the past of the Psalmist to the future

here, is itself significant. The words were true of the inner burning which consumed the prophet-priest. They come to the heart as true, with a fuller truth, of Christ's spirit burning with righteous indignation, and cast down by deepest sorrow; but shrinking not from the painful task, which leaves its mark falling on that face as the shadow of a deeper darkness. They are to be, in a deeper sense, truer still.

(18) Then answered the Jews

. . . —Comp., for the meaning of "the Jews," chap. i. 19; and for their question, Matt. xxi. 23. The Mosaic legislation contained a warning against the efficiency of the test by signs (Deut. xiii. 1—3), but it was of the essence of Pharisaism to cling to it (Matt. xii. 38; 1 Cor. i. 22). It supplied an easy means of rejecting the moral conviction. A sign can only be evidence to the mind open to read the underlying truth. For "an evil and adulterous generation" it has no voice, and they can, after the feeding of the thousands, still demand, "What sign shonest Thou?" (chap. vi. 30). There are bigots of incredulity. Knowledge is dependent upon action and will (comp. chap. vii. 17). There is a mental condition which no evidence can convince, for it can always demand more. "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke xvi. 31).

(19) Here, as in Matt. xii. 38, a

answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple,<sup>a</sup> and in three days I will raise it up. <sup>(20)</sup> Then said

<sup>a</sup> Matt.  
26. 61.

the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

sign is given referring to His resurrection. The sign is in its nature an enigma, meaningless to him who does not seek to understand it, but full of meaning for him who earnestly examines into the thing signified, and in such a form as impresses itself on the memory and educates the moral powers. We have had an example of this enigmatic teaching in chap. i. 15, 27, 30. We shall meet with others. (Comp. iv. and vi. ; xvi. 25.) The enigma turns in the present case upon the double sense of the word "temple." It meant the sacred shrine of the Deity, the Holy and Most Holy place, as distinct from the wider Temple area. But the true shrine of the Deity was the body of the Incarnate Word. The Temple of wood and stone was but the representative of the Divine Presence. That Presence was then actually in their midst. They had no reverence for the one; for, like its outer courts, it had become a house of merchandise, and was fast becoming a den of thieves. This very demand for an outward sign, while all around them feel a spiritual power, shows they have as little reverence for the other. They will destroy the real shrine; the shrine of wood and stone even will not be left to represent a Presence no longer among them. He will raise up the temple of His body the third day, and in that resurrection will be the foundation stone of the spiritual temple for the world. The use of the word "temple" by

the Jews in this double sense is attested by their interpretation of the Old Testament. We have an example of the use of "tabernacle" in a parallel sense in chap. i. 14 (comp. 2 Pet. i. 13, 14), and the full idea of a spiritual worship and presence in chap. iv. 21—24. The sign may have been suggested by the double thought then present—the Jews destroying the sanctity of the material Temple, the disciples seeing in Him one consumed by zeal for it. (Comp. 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.)

<sup>(20)</sup> They profess to seek a sign for evidence; they use it for evil.

**Forty and six years was this temple in building.**—It is implied that it was not then finished. The date of the completion is given by Josephus (*Ant.* xx. 9, § 7) as A.D. 64. The same author gives the eighteenth year of the reign of Herod the Great (Nisan 734—Nisan 735, A.U.C.) as the commencement of the renewal of the Temple of Zerubbabel (*Ant.* xv. 11, § 1). This would give A.U.C. 781—782, *i.e.*, A.D. 28—29, as the date of the cleansing. In another passage Josephus gives the month Kislev A.U.C. 734, as the date of the festival connected with the building of the Temple (*Ant.* xiv. 16, § 4). This would fix our present date as the Passover of A.U.C. 781, *i.e.*, A.D. 28. St. Luke furnishes us with an independent date for the commencement of the ministry of John the Baptist. If we count the "fifteenth year of

(<sup>21</sup>) But he spake of the temple of his body. (<sup>22</sup>) When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them ; and they

believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

(<sup>23</sup>) Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many be-

the reign of Tiberius (comp. Luke iii. 1) from the commencement of his first reign with Augustus (A.U.C. 765, i.e., A.D. 12), this date will be A.U.C. 780, i.e., A.D. 27. The present Passover was in the following year, i.e., as before, A.D. 28. The sole reign of Tiberius commenced two years later (A.D. 14), so that while we have certainly no discrepancy between these independent dates, we have probably a very striking coincidence. Its bearing upon the authenticity of the present Gospel is evident.

Rear it up represents the same Greek word as "raise up," in the previous verse; but the word fits the double meaning. It is the regular term for raising from the dead; but it is also used of rearing up a building as, e.g., in 3 Esdras v. 44; Eccl. xlix. 11.

(<sup>21</sup>) But he spake.—Literally, *was speaking*. This is the solution of the enigma as the disciples read it in the after history. It is remarkable that we have the interpretation of the spiritual temple in Mark xiv. 58 (comp. chap. iv. 21, 23).

(<sup>22</sup>) That he had said this unto them.—The better text omit "unto them." For the way in which the saying, hard to be understood, fixed itself in men's minds, comp. Matt. xvi. 61; xxviii. 40; Mark xiv. 58; xv. 29; Acts vi. 13. It becomes in the

mouth of false witnesses the accusation by means of which its meaning is accomplished. The death on the cross is the destruction of the Temple, but it is not unaccompanied by the rent veil; the two meanings are linked together.

It fixed itself, too, on the disciples' minds; but weeks, months, years, did not cast any light upon it until the Resurrection. These passages of those familiar Old Testament writings then came to men who had been slow of heart to see them, with the quickening power of a new life. They saw that Christ ought to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory. They saw in Moses and the Prophets the things concerning Him, and they believed in a new and higher sense the written and the spoken word. (Comp. Luke xxiv. 26 *et seq.*)

(<sup>23</sup>) In the feast day.—Omit the word "day" after feast. The italics show that there is no word to express it in the Greek, and it gives the impression of one day, whereas the feast extended over a week. The idea of time, moreover, is not expressed by "in the feast." The sentence means, *When He was in the feast (engaged in keeping the feast) at Jerusalem, during the Passover.*

Many believed.—The persons are distinct from the official representatives of the nation (verses 18,

lieved in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. <sup>(24)</sup> But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, <sup>(25)</sup> and needed not that any should testify of

A.D. 30.

man : for he knew what was in man.

### CHAPTER III.—

<sup>(1)</sup> There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews :

19), as the place, Jerusalem, is distinguished from the Temple.

**When they saw the miracles.**—Better, as before, *signs*. The original words imply that their faith was dependent upon the signs which they gazed upon, without entering into their deeper meaning. It was the impulsive response of the moment, not based upon a previous preparation, nor resulting in a present deep conviction. It came far short of the faith of the disciples, who passed from a true knowledge of Moses and the Prophets to a true knowledge of Christ without a sign ; but it came far above the disbelief of scribes and Pharisees, who after a sign rejected Him. It was not the prepared good ground bringing forth abundantly ; but neither was it the hardened wayside which did not receive the seed at all.

<sup>(24)</sup> But beneath this shallow surface there is the unbroken ledge of rock. They are easily moved just because they are not deeply moved. The eye which looked at, looked into, others (comp. chap. i. 47 *et seq.*), saw to the very depth of their hearts too, and knew all. It saw in that depth that the true inner man did not believe, did not commit itself to Him ; it found not the spiritual receptivity, and there could not therefore be the spiritual revelation. He, on His part, did not commit Himself unto them.

(Comp. chap. viii. 31, Note.) Our version gives the correct sense, but it should be noted that “believed” in verse 23, and “commit” here, represent the same Greek word.

<sup>(25)</sup> **And needed not.**—Better, and because He needed not.

**For he knew.**—Better, *for he of Himself knew*. The verse is a wider statement of the general truth of which verse 24 is a particular instance. He did not in that instance need any testimony of spiritual state and character, because He then, as always, read what was in man.

### III

<sup>(1)</sup> **There was a man.**—Read, *But there was a man*. Our division of chapters breaks the connection, and the omission of the conjunction leads us to think of the visit of Nicodemus as quite distinct from what has gone before ; whereas it really rises out of it (comp. verse 2 with chap. ii. 23).

The name Nicodemus was not uncommon among the Jews, but like Stephen, Philip, Jason, &c., was derived from their intercourse with the Greeks. (Comp. *e.g.*, Demosth. 549, 23, and Jos. *Ant.* xiv. 3, § 2.) Of this particular Nicodemus, we know with certainty nothing more than is told us in this Gospel (chaps. vii. 50; xix. 39). The Talmud mentions ■

<sup>(2)</sup> the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come

from God : for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

Nak<sup>ed</sup>imon, so called from a miracle performed by him, who was the son of Gorion, and whose real name was Bonai. It also gives the name Bonai as one of the disciples of Jesus. He was one of the three richest Jews when Titus besieged Jerusalem, but his family was reduced to the most abject poverty. So far the Talmud. The inference is that this change of fortune is connected with his becoming a Christian and with the persecution which followed, and he is himself identified with the Nicodemus of the Gospel. We can only say this may be so. The reader who cares for more on the subject will find full references in Lampe, and the extracts from the Talmud translated in Lightfoot. Others may be content to accept this latter writer's conclusion. "It is not worth while to take great pains in a question which is very involved, if we may not also call it useless" (For the "Pharisees," to which sect Nicodemus belonged, comp. chap. i. 24, and Matt. iii. 7.)

**Ruler of the Jews.**—One of the Sanhedrin (comp. chap. i. 19, Note). This is made certain by the position of Nicodemus, in chap. vii. 50.

**(2) By night.**—This has impressed itself upon the writer's mind, so that it becomes part of the description of Nicodemus in chap. xix. 39, and in some MSS. in chap. vii. 50. We have to think of him as having heard the answer of the messengers sent to the

Baptist (chap. i. 20 *et seq.*), as present at the cleansing of the Temple, as the witness of miracles in Jerusalem, as by these means convinced that this Teacher had a message from God, and resolved to hear it. But the Sanhedrin had officially taken a hostile position, and an individual member of it dare not openly take any other. His own conviction is expressed by his coming to Jesus at all; his fear of public opinion and of the possible exclusion from the synagogue by his coming at night. (Comp. chap. xii. 42, 43.)

**Rabbi.**—The customary title of reverence for a teacher (comp. Note on chap. i. 38), but given here by a technically trained Rabbi to One who had no formal title to it (chap. vii. 15).

**We know that thou art a teacher come from God.**—This explains the title he has used. He does not go beyond this. There has been, as in the case of John the Baptist, sufficient to prove a more than human mission, but with this there has been nothing to meet the common Messianic expectation. Still, if this is a Prophet, working miracles like those of old, and evidently sent from God, He will be able to solve all doubts, and answer the questions pressing on the hearts of men. The plural pronoun expresses nothing more than the general conviction that the power to work miracles was a divine attestation of the teaching (chap. ix. 18, 33). There were,

<sup>(3)</sup> Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, | <sup>1 Or, from above.</sup> I say unto thee, Except a man be born again,<sup>1</sup> he

indeed, others in the same mental position as Nicodemus, but none accompanied him; and it is not probable that his visit was known to any of them. The “we” occurs again in our Lord’s reply in verse 11, and it may be that both find their true explanation in the fact that this interview took place in the house, and in the presence of John, who had led Nicodemus to come, as he himself had gone, with doubting heart, to the place where Jesus was dwelling (chap. i. 38).

**(3) Jesus answered and said unto him.**—The words of Nicodemus are clearly only a preface to further questions. Jesus at once answers these questions; the answer being, as it frequently is, to the unexpressed thought (comp., e.g., chap. ii. 18). The coming of the Messiah, the Divine Glory, God’s Kingdom, these are the thoughts which filled men’s minds. These miracles—in what relation did they stand to it? This Teacher—what message from God had He about it?

**Verily, verily, I say unto thee.**—(Comp. chap. i. 51.) The words are in the decisive tone of authority and certainty. “This is God’s teaching for thee, teacher as thou thyself art” (verse 10).

**Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**—Our translators have followed the ancient expositors in giving the alternative renderings “born again” and “born from above” (margin). Chrysostom notes the two currents of interpretation in his day; and in our own day the opinions of

scholars, whether we count them or weigh them, may be equally claimed for either view. There can be no doubt that the Greek word (*ἀνωθεν*) is found with both meanings. It is equally certain that St. John elsewhere uses it in the local sense “from above” only (chaps. iii. 31; xix. 11, 23); but these instances are not sufficient to establish an *usus loquendi*, and the sense here, and in verse 7, must be taken in connection with the meaning of the verb. (Comp. the same word in Luke i. 3, “from the very first,” and Gal. iv. 9, “again.”) What has not, perhaps, been sufficiently noted is, that the Greek word is not the true key to the difficulty, and that its double sense has led men to seek the meaning in a wrong direction. The dialogue was between One who was called and one who really was a Rabbi. The word actually used almost certainly conveyed but one sense, and it is this sense which the Syriac version, coming to us from the second century, and closely connected with the Palestinian dialect of the first century, has preserved. This version reads “from the beginning,” “afresh,” “anew.” This is the sense which St. John wishes to express for his Greek readers, and the word used by him exactly does express it. That the Greek word has another meaning also, which expresses the same thought from another point of view, may have determined its choice. This other point of view was certainly not absent from the circle of the writer’s thoughts (comp. chap. i. 13).

cannot see the kingdom of God. <sup>(4)</sup> Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time

into his mother's womb, and be born? <sup>(5)</sup> Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and

The phrase "Kingdom of God," with the parallels "Kingdom of Christ" and "Kingdom of heaven," were common in the current Jewish literature (*e.g.*, Targum, Isa. xl. 9; Mic. iv. 7) to express the Messianic reign. They are frequent in the earlier Gospels, but in this Gospel only one phrase is found, and that only here (verses 4 and 5) in converse with a Rabbi. To "see" the kingdom is, in New Testament usage, equivalent to "enter into the kingdom," verse 5, where indeed some MSS. read "see." (Comp. in this chap. verse 36, and Luke ii. 26; Acts ii. 27; Heb. xi. 5; 1 Pet. iii. 10; Rev. xviii. 7.) The condition of the spiritual vision which can see this kingdom is spiritual life, and this life is dependent on being born anew.

**(4) How can a man be born . . . ?**—Nicodemus understands the words "born again" in the sense given above. The thought is not wholly strange to him. The Rabbis were accustomed to speak of proselytes as children, and the term "new creature" (comp. 2 Cor. v. 17) was in frequent use to express the call of Abraham. But he is himself a child of Abraham, a member of the theocratic kingdom, and is expecting the glory of Messiah's reign. He is a teacher of the Law, a ruler of the chosen people. He is not as a heathen who can be born into the holy nation. The ordinary spiritual sense of the words cannot hold in his case. What can they mean?

He does not wilfully misinterpret, for this is opposed to the whole character of the man, nor does he really suppose the physical meaning is intended; but after the method of Rabbinic dialogue, he presses the impossible meaning of the words in order to exclude it, and to draw forth the true meaning. "You cannot mean that a man is to enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born. What is it, then, that you do mean?"

**When he is old** does not necessarily apply to Nicodemus himself. It is the most difficult special case coming under the general term, "a man." In Philo's artificial division of the lifetime, based on that of Hippocrates, the "old man" (*γέρων*) is one more than fifty-six years (*De Mund. Opif.* § 36). If we understand this of Nicodemus personally, it will make the identification with Nakedimon (Note on verse 1) barely possible.

**(5) Again the words "Verily, verily"** (comp. Note on chap. i. 51), calling attention to the deeper truth which follows; and again the words of authority, "I say unto thee."

**Of water and of the Spirit.**—We are here on the borderland of a great controversy. The subject is closely connected with that of the discourse in Capernaum (chap. vi.), and so far as it is a subject for the pages of a Commentary at all, it will be better to treat of it in connection with that discourse. (See *Excursus D*, p. 435).

of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of

God. <sup>(6)</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh;

Our task here is to ask what meaning the words were intended by the Speaker to convey to the hearer; and this seems not to admit of doubt. The baptism of proselytes was already present to the thought; the baptism of John had excited the attention of all Jerusalem, and the Sanhedrin had officially inquired into it. Jesus Himself had submitted to it, but "the Pharisees and lawyers" [Nicodemus was both] "rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptised of him" (Luke vii. 29). The key to the present verse is found in the declaration of John, "I baptise with water . . . He baptiseth with the Holy Ghost" (chap. i. 26, 33), and this key must have been then in the mind of Nicodemus. The message was, baptism with water; baptism with water, by which the Gentile had been admitted as a new-born babe to Judaism, the rite representing the cleansing of the life from heathen pollutions, and devotion to the service of the true God; baptism with water, which John had preached in his ministry of reformation (comp. Matt. iii. 7), declaring a like cleansing as needed for Jew and Gentile, Pharisee and publican, as the gate to the kingdom of heaven, which was at hand; baptism with water, which demanded a public profession in the presence of witnesses, and an open loyalty to the new kingdom, not a visit by night, under the secrecy of darkness—this is the message of God to the teacher seeking admission to His kingdom. This he would understand. It would now be clear to him why John came baptising, and why Jews

were themselves baptised confessing their sins. There is no further explanation of the "outward and visible sign," but the teaching passes on to the "inward and spiritual grace," the baptism of the Holy Ghost, the birth of the Spirit, which was the work of the Messiah Himself. Of this, indeed, there were foreshadowings and promises in the Old Testament Scriptures (comp., e.g., Ezek. xxxvi. 25 et seq.; Jer. xxxi. 33; Joel ii. 28); but the deeper meaning of such passages was buried beneath the ruins of the schools of prophets, and few among later teachers had penetrated to it. It is hard for this Rabbi to see it, even when it is brought home to him.

<sup>(6)</sup> **That which is born of the flesh is flesh.**—The first step is to remind him of the law of likeness in natural generation. "Flesh," as distinct from "spirit," is human nature in so far as it is common with animal nature, consisting of the bodily frame and its animal life, feelings, and passions. "Flesh," as opposed to "spirit," is this nature as not under the guidance of the human spirit, which is itself the shrine of the Divine Spirit, and therefore it is sinful. (Comp. Gal. v. 16 et seq.; vi. 8.) It is this nature in its material constitution, and subject to sin, which is transmitted from father to son. The physical life itself is dependent upon birth. That which is born of the flesh is flesh.

There is an analogous law of spiritual generation. Spirit as opposed to flesh is the differentia of man as distinct from all other

and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>(7)</sup> Marvel not that I said unto

<sup>1</sup>Or, from above.

thee, Ye must be born again.<sup>1</sup> <sup>(8)</sup> The wind bloweth where it listeth, and

creatures. It is the image of God in him, the seat of the capacity for the communion with God, which is the true principle of life. In the natural man this is crushed and dormant; in the spiritual man it has been quickened by the influence of the Holy Ghost. This is a new life in him, and the spiritual life, like the physical, is dependent upon birth. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

<sup>(7)</sup> **Ye must be born again.**—The laws of natural and spiritual generation have been stated as general truths, holding good for all mankind, “that which is born.” But there is a special application to the present case, “Marvel not that I said unto thee (teacher as thou art) that ye (children of Abraham as ye are) must be born again.” In so far as they were children of Abraham according to the flesh, they were children of Abraham’s physical and sinful nature. The law of that, as of all human nature, was that flesh ruled animal life, and animal life ruled spirit, and the whole man became carnal, bringing forth the fruits of the flesh. The law of the regenerate nature was that the spirit, born by the influence of the Divine Spirit, rose to a new life of communion with God, controlled the lower life, with its affections, feelings, and desires, and that these thus controlled became the motive power of the body; the whole man thus became spiritual, bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit. (Comp. 1 Thess. v. 23.) For them, then, as for all, it was

no matter of wonder, it was an absolute necessity of their true life, that they should be born anew.

<sup>(8)</sup> **The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof.**—Better (see Note below), *the Spirit breatheth where He willeth, and thou hearest His voice.* These words are an explanation of the spiritual birth, the necessity of which has been asserted in the previous verses. They must have come to Nicodemus, bringing in their sound echoes of the old familiar words, “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen. ii. 7). These words would bring to the mind thoughts of the human body, cold, lifeless, corpse-like; of the breath of life passing into it; of the beating pulse, the opening eye, the action of nerve, muscle, and limb, as, in obedience to God’s will, matter became the framework of spirit, and man became a living soul. There are parallel thoughts of the spirit existing in capacity for life and union with God, but crushed beneath the physical life with its imperative demands for support, and the sensible life with its engrossing pleasures and pains, and sorrows and joys; of the Spirit of God breathing upon it; and of the dormant power awakening into a new life of noblest thoughts and hopes and energies, when man is born of the Spirit.

And yet the new spiritual birth,

thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and

whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

like the physical, cannot be explained. We can observe the phenomena, we cannot trace the principle of life. He breatheth where He willeth, in the wide world of man, free as the wind of heaven, bound by no limits of country or of race. The voice is heard speaking to the man himself, and through him to others; there is the evidence of the new birth in the new life. We know not whence He comes, or whither He goes. We cannot fix the day or hour of the new birth with certainty. We know not what its final issues will be. It is the beginning of a life which is a constant growth, and the highest development here is but the germ of that which shall be hereafter (1 John iii. 2).

**So is every one that is born of the Spirit.**—The sense is, *In this manner is every one (born) who is born of the Spirit.* The universality is again emphatically asserted. Individual spiritual life depends upon individual spiritual birth. The baptism of the Spirit is needed for all. Now, indeed, coming as a fire burning in men's hearts, consuming the chaff of sin, while He purifies and stores up all that is true and good; now coming as in a moment, and arresting a man in a course of evil, revealing the iniquity of sin, and giving the power to reform; now coming as the gradual dawning of day upon the youthful soul who has never been wholly without it; here in a sermon or a prayer, there in the lessons of childhood; now by the

example of a noble life or the lessons of history; again in the study of Scripture or the truths written on the page of nature—the Spirit breatheth where He willeth. We may not limit His action, but by His action must every one be born again. Comp. the instances of what men call gradual conversion and sudden conversion, placed side by side in the same chapter, in Acts xvi. 14, 29 *et seq.*

The rendering of the first clause of this verse by the *Spirit breatheth* for “wind bloweth” of the Authorised version has met with so little support that it is right to state briefly the grounds on which it rests.

(1) The word *πνεῦμα* (*pneuma*) occurs some 370 times in the Greek New Testament, and of these, twenty-three times in this Gospel. It is nowhere rendered “wind” by our translators, except in this instance, and they have rendered the same word by “Spirit” in the same verse, and twice besides in the same context (verses 5, 6). There is another word for “wind” (*ἀνέμος*), which occurs thirty-one times in the New Testament, and which John himself uses in chap. vi. 18. It is not contended that *πνεῦμα* may not mean “wind,” “the breath of wind,” but that this is not its New Testament use, where the word is restricted to its special meaning. (It is plural in Heb. i. 7.) It is admitted also that the Hebrew or Chaldee word which *πνεῦμα* here translates has the two senses, but the sense in

<sup>(9)</sup> Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? <sup>(10)</sup> Jesus

answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not

which it is here used is fixed by the translator.

(2) The word for “bloweth,” “breatheth,” is of the same root as πνεῦμα. It is used in the New Testament with “wind,” but naturally has the meaning of its cognate substantive. The Vulgate can exactly render it by “Spiritus ubi vult spirat,” but we have in English no verb cognate with “Spirit.”

(3) It is perfectly natural to ascribe the power of willing to the Spirit, but it is not consistent with the simplicity of our Lord’s teaching thus to personify “wind,” especially in teaching on a subject where the simplest words are hard to fathom. The common rendering makes *Him* use the same word, in the same verse, of the third person in the Trinity, and of a natural phenomenon.

(4) The proper meaning of the word rendered “sound” (φωνή) is articulate “voice.” It is used in fifteen passages in this Gospel only, and everywhere translated “voice” except here. Let the reader substitute the one meaning for the other in any of these passages, e.g., chaps. i. 23; iii. 29; v. 25, 28; x. 3, 4, 5, 16, and he will find that they are not interchangeable.

(5) It is believed that the rendering adopted agrees with the whole context, and gives a fuller sense to the words of the great Teacher.

(6) The sense suggested for the last clause, “In this manner is every one born who is of the Spirit,” removes the necessity of finding something with which the work of

the Spirit may be compared, and it is in this necessity that the received versions of the first clause really find their root.

These reasons are, it is thought, not an insufficient basis for the interpretation here adopted. It is adopted not without the knowledge that a consensus of authorities may be pleaded against it. For its details it may be that no authority can be pleaded, but the rendering of πνεῦμα here by “spirit” is not without the support of width of learning and depth of power, critical acumen and spiritual insight, for it rests on the names of Origen and Augustine, of Albrecht Bengel and Frederick Maurice.

(9) **How can these things be?**—The answer to the previous question has spoken of a spiritual birth and a spiritual life and a spiritual kingdom, but all this is in a region of which the Rabbinic schools knew nothing. They were the authorised exponents of Law and Prophets; they knew the precise number of words, and the shape of letters; the form of a phylactery, and the width of a fringe; the tithing of garden herbs, and the manner of washing the hands: but spirit, life, a man’s soul born again!—“how can these things be?”

(10) **Art thou a master of Israel?**—Better, *Art thou the teacher of Israel?* The article is emphatic, and points to the position of Nicodemus as a teacher of repute—“the well-known teacher;” or possibly it is to be understood of the Sanhedrin as represented by

these things? <sup>(11)</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have

seen, and ye receive not our witness. <sup>(12)</sup> If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall

him—"Is this the teaching of Israel?" There is something of just indignation here, as everywhere when the words of Jesus Christ are addressed to the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. "You who teach others, have you need to learn the very first lessons of true religion? You who claim to loose and bind men, and place heavy burdens on them which they cannot bear, are you without the simplest real knowledge of what God is, or of what man is? Do teachers of Israel know not these things when they lie beneath every page of the Old Testament Scriptures?"

<sup>(11)</sup> **Verily, verily, I say unto thee.** Once again the "Verily, verily" of deeper truth. "We speak that we do know" is in sharp contrast to their formal teaching of matters external to the truth. The plural is not usual in the language of Christ, and the immediate passage to the singular forbids us to accept the usual grammatical explanation that it is the plural of majesty. He apparently joins others with Himself—those who have spoken and known and testified—and whose testimony has been rejected by the Jews. We have to think of him whose life-work was to bear witness of the Light (chap. i. 8), and of the band of disciples who form a little school round their Master, and who in Jeruselem, as in Galilee, testified of Him; and it may even be that in the house and presence of one of that band this conversation took place (comp. verse

2). They knew the power of the new life, and had been baptised of water and of spirit. In their measure and degree, as He in fulness, they spake what they knew, and testified what they had seen. (Comp. chap. xv. 27.)

**And ye receive not our witness**—i.e., "ye Jews," the teachers, of whom Nicodemus was one, the representatives of His own who received Him not (chap. i. 11). This attitude of the mind which refused to accept the evidence of witnesses as to things they had known and seen was of the essence of unbelief, and made further revelation impossible. When the will closed the faculty of faith, it left open no access for fuller spiritual truth.

<sup>(12)</sup> **Earthly things**—i.e., things upon earth, having the sphere of their action upon earth. These are not necessarily restricted to the subjects of this interview. The context includes previous witness borne by Him, and there must have been much which is unrecorded. (Comp. chap. ii. 23.) But the new birth is not excluded from "earthly things," because it is the entrance to a life which, while it is spiritual, is still a life upon earth.

**Heavenly things**, in the same way, are things which have the sphere of their action in heaven, the full development of their spiritual life, of which the birth only is on earth; the divine counsels of redemption; the Messianiac mysteries, of which this

ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? <sup>(13)</sup> And

no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came

ruler of Israel does not understand even the initiation. Comp. the question in the Wisdom of Solomon, "What man is he that can know the counsel of God? or who can think what the will of the Lord is? . . . And hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon earth, and with labour do we find the things that are before us: but the things that are in heaven who hath searched out?" (ix. 13, 16).

The earthly things are the elements of spiritual knowledge, having their test in the moral sense and in their fitness to supply the spiritual wants of man. When these elements are learnt, the mind is then, and then only, fitted to receive heavenly things. The teaching can only proceed step by step from the known to the unknown; but if the will refuses or the intellect neglects to know the knowable, the man cuts himself off from the power to receive truth. The message from the spirit-world has come, and others read it; but he has not learnt the alphabet. (Comp. Note on chap. xvi. 12.)

<sup>(13)</sup> **And no man hath ascended up.**—There can be no other means of receiving heavenly truth. No man hath learnt it, and is able to teach it, except the Son of Man, who ever was, and is, in heaven. The thought has met us before (chap. i. 18). To Nicodemus it must have come as an answer to the words of Agur, which had passed into a proverb to express the vanity of human effort to know God. "Who hath ascended up

into heaven or descended? . . . What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?" (Prov. xxx. 4). No man had so passed to heaven and returned again to earth; but there was One then speaking with him who had been in heaven with God, and could tell him its eternal truths. He had that knowledge which a man could obtain only by ascending to heaven, and He came down from heaven with it. From the human point of view He was as one who had already ascended and descended. (Comp. Note on chap. i. 51.) This is the evident meaning of the sentence, and the form is quite consistent with it. To explain the perfect tense of the future ascension, or to introduce the idea of the "hypostatic union," by virtue of which the human nature may be said to have ascended into heaven with the divine, is, to give an explanation, not of the text, but of a misunderstanding of it. Comp. chap. vi. 62.)

**Which is in heaven.**—These words are omitted in some MSS., including the Sinaitic and the Vatican. The judgment of most modern editors (not including Westcott and Hort) retains them. It is an instance where it is hard to account for the insertion by a copyist, but where the omission is not unlikely, owing to their seeming difficulty. And yet the difficulty is one which vanishes before the true idea of heaven. If heaven is thought of as a place infinitely distant beyond clouds and sky, or as a time in the far future when this world's life shall end, then it

down from heaven, even  
the Son of man which is in  
heaven.

(14) And as Moses lifted

<sup>a</sup> Num.  
21. 9.

up the serpent in the wil-  
derness,<sup>a</sup> even so must the  
Son of man be lifted up:  
(15) that whosoever believeth

is indeed hard to understand what is here meant by "the Son of Man which is in heaven;" and a copyist may well have found in omission the easiest solution of the difficulty. But if heaven is something wholly different from this coldness of distance in space or time; if it is a state, a life, in which we are, which is in us—now in part, hereafter in its fulness—then may we understand and with glad hearts hold to the vital truth that the Son of Man, who came down from heaven, was ever in heaven; and that every son of man who is born of water and of the Spirit is "made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor (in the present, *κληρονόμος*) of the kingdom of heaven."

(14) **And as Moses lifted up.**—This verse is closely connected by the conjunction "and" with what has gone before. Jesus has taught that in Himself heaven and earth meet; so that, while subject to the conditions of human life, He, the Son of Man, the representative of humanity, is in heaven. He goes on to show that what is true of the representative is, through Him, true of the whole race. Again, the Old Testament Scriptures form the basis of the teaching to their expounder. The people in the wilderness bitten by the fiery serpents, the poison-virus spreading through their veins, and causing burning pain, torpor, and death—this was symbolical of the world lying in the misery, restlessness, and

spiritual death, which came from the Serpent's victory in Paradise. The serpent of brass lifted up by Moses, in which the sufferer saw the means of recovery determined by God, and was healed by faith in Him—this was symbolical of the means of salvation determined by God for the world. (Comp. the phrase "lifted up" in chaps. viii. 28; xii. 32; and, as an exact parallel with this passage, chap. xii. 34.) Nicodemus must have understood that the healing power of the serpent of brass was in the fact that it led men to trust in Jehovah, who had appointed it. This was the current Jewish interpretation. Comp. the Jerusalem Targum, "Their faces were to be fixed on their Father who is in heaven;" so the Targum of Jonathan ben-Uzziel, "The heart was fixed on the name of the word of Jehovah;" so, again, the Wisdom of Solomon, "For he that turned himself toward it was not saved by the thing that he saw, but by Thee, that art the Saviour of all" (xvi. 7; see the whole passage, xvi. 6—13). It was the sign of the Eternal in power and in love present to save, and the man who realised that presence lived with a new life. In the divine counsels it was willed, and must be, that the Son of Man should be the witness to the world of the Eternal Power and Love which saves every man who grasps it.

(15) **Not perish, but . . .**—These words have been added here

in him should not perish,  
but have eternal life.

(16) For God so loved the

<sup>a 1 Jot</sup>  
<sup>4. 9.</sup>

world, that he gave his  
only begotten Son,<sup>a</sup> that  
whosoever believeth in him

from the following verse. Omitting them, the sentence should be rendered, *that every one who believeth may have in Him eternal life.* This construction is borne out by a comparison of chaps. v. 39; xvi. 33; xx. 31. "To believe in Him" is not used by St. John. (See Note on chap. i. 12.) The thought of this verse is that as every Israelite, believing in God, had in the brazen serpent a message from God; so every man who believes in God ever has this message from God, in the crucified Son of Man. The object of faith is not here expressed. The words speak only of the man who believeth, whose heart is open to spiritual truth. That man has, in Jesus Christ and Him crucified, a truth which goes to his inmost spirit, sending a new life through his whole being. To the non-believer this may be but the self-sacrifice of heroism. To the believer it is Light breaking upon the darkness of his soul; it is Life bursting the cold sepulchre of a deadened spirit; it is Love winning its way through the scales of a hardened heart; it is Mercy deeper and wider even than his sin; it is Hope bracing the man to a new life of holiness; it is the Word of God, and in Him he has eternal life. The reader will not forget that the lifting up the serpent of brass followed the confession of the people. "We have sinned . . . pray unto the Lord that He take away the serpents from us" (Num. xxi. 7).

(17) The last verse has spoken

of "every one who believeth." The thought went beyond the limits that Rabbis set to the kingdom of God. Its only limit is humanity. This thought is now repeated and strengthened by the "might not perish," and the love of God is made the foundation on which it rests. Perhaps no verse in the Bible has been so much explained as this; perhaps no verse can be so little explained. Most young preachers have sermons upon it; older men learn that its meaning must be felt and thought, rather than spoken. Still less can it be written; and this note may not attempt to do more than indicate some lines of thought which may help to lead to others.

**God so loved the world.**—Familiar as the words are to us, they were uttered to Nicodemus for the first time. They are the revelation of the nature of God, and the ground of our love to God and man. (Comp. 1 John iv. 7—11.)

**His only begotten Son.**—Here, once again, the Old Testament scriptures suggest and explain the words used. Every Jew knew, and loved to think and tell of his fore-father who was willing to sacrifice his own and only son in obedience to what he thought to be the will of God (Gen. xxii.). But Love gives, and does not require, sacrifice. God wills not that Abraham should give his son, but He gave His only begotten Son. The dread power that man has ever conceived—that is not God; the pursuing vengeance that sin has ever imagined—that

should not perish, but have <sup>a ch. 12.47.</sup> everlasting life. <sup>(17)</sup> For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the

world; <sup>a</sup> but that the world through him might be saved.

<sup>(18)</sup> He that believeth on

is not God; the unsatisfied anger that sacrifice has ever suggested—that is not God. But all that human thought has ever gathered of tenderness, forgiveness, love, in the relation of father to only child—all this is, in the faintness of an earth-drawn picture, an approach to the true idea of God. Yes, the true idea is infinitely beyond all this; for the love for the world gives in sacrifice the love for the only begotten Son.

**Believeth in.**—Better *believeth upon*. The preposition is not the same as in the last verse. (Comp. chap. i. 12.) There the thought was of the Son of Man lifted up, in whom every one who believes and can interpret spiritual truth, ever has eternal life. Here the thought is of the Son of God given for the world, and every one who believes upon, casts his whole being upon Him, and, like Abraham, in will rests all upon God, finds that God has provided Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering instead of human sacrifice or death.

**Everlasting life.**—Better, as the same Greek word is rendered in the previous verse, *eternal life*. For the meaning of this word see Matt. xxv. 46. It is of frequent use in this Gospel (seventeen times), and always used in reference to life.

<sup>(17)</sup> **To condemn the world** gives to the English reader a stronger impression than that of the original Greek. The word *κρίνω*, *krino*, the Latin *c(k)erno*, and

the English *dis-cern*) means originally to separate, and in the moral sense to separate good from evil. Passing from the act to the effect, it may mean to absolve; but as the usual effect of separation is to exclude the evil, the word has attached to itself more frequently the idea of condemnation. Our word *judge*, which has itself something of this double meaning, is probably the best rendering in this context.

Part of the current belief about the Messiah's advent was, that he would destroy the Gentile world. The authorised expositions of many texts of the Old Testament asserted this, and Nicodemus must oftentimes have heard it and taught it. God's love for, and gift to, the world has just been declared. This truth runs counter to their belief, and is now stated as an express denial of it. The purpose of the Messiah's mission is not to judge, but to save. The latter clause of the verse changes the order of the thought. It would naturally be "but that He might save the world." The inversion makes prominent the action of man in willing to be saved.

<sup>(18)</sup> **He that believeth on him is not condemned.**—Again, *judged* is better than "condemned." There is, moreover, an important change of tense in this verse, which the Authorised version does not mark clearly. *He that believeth on Him, is not judged: but he that believeth not, hath been (and is) already judged.*

him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. <sup>(19)</sup> And this is the condemnation, that

<sup>a</sup> ch. 1. 4.

light is come into the world,<sup>a</sup> and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. <sup>(20)</sup> For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the

**Because he hath not believed.**—The human spirit fulfils the end of its being, and finds its highest good, in communion with God. It cannot, then, fail to recognise and believe in a revelation of God. This revelation has been made in the only way in which it can be fully made (comp. chap. i. 18), in the person of the only begotten Son. The very fact that He is rejected is the judgment of the spirit which rejects. It has lost by neglect its power to perceive, or by will it hides itself from God. “I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself” (Gen. iii. 10).

<sup>(19)</sup> **And this is the condemnation.**—For “condemnation” read *judgment*; for “light” and “darkness,” *the light* and *the darkness*. The object is salvation, not judgment (verse 17); but the separation of the good involves the judgment of the evil. The light makes the darkness visible. Both were before men. That they chose darkness was the act of their own will, and this act of the will was determined by the evil of their deeds. “The light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.” (Comp. Note on chap. i. 5.)

The words are general, but they must have had, for him who then

heard them, a special force. It was night. He had avoided the light of day, and like men who go forth to deeds of darkness under cover of darkness, he had come in secrecy to Jesus. His own conscience told him that he was in the presence of a Teacher sent from God (verse 2); but he has checked the voice of conscience. He has shrunk from coming to this Teacher in the light of day, and has loved the darkness of the night.

<sup>(20)</sup> **For every one that doeth evil hateth the light.**—In this and the next verse we have the explanation of the choice of the darkness and rejection of the light. The fact itself is first stated more strongly. Not only does the man that doeth evil love darkness rather than light, but he hates the light. (Comp. Note on chap. vii. 7.) Its presence makes manifest and reproves his works, which he would hide even from himself. It illuminates the dark and secret chambers of the heart, and reveals thoughts and deeds which conscience, seeing in this light, trembles at, and turns away to darkness that it may hide itself from its own gaze.

It has been often noted that the word “doeth,” in this and the following verse, represent different words in the original. Perhaps we may distinguish them in English by rendering this verse: “Every

light, lest his deeds should be reproved.<sup>1</sup> <sup>(21)</sup> But he that doeth truth cometh

<sup>1</sup> Or, discovered.

to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

one that *practiseth evil*." It is not less important to note that the word for evil here differs from the word so rendered in the last clause of the previous verse. Strictly, and the change of word seems to demand a strict interpretation (comp. Note on chap. v. 29), it is not that which is positively, but that which is negatively, evil—that which is trivial, poor, worthless. The man who practiseth such things misses the aim of life, and turns from the light that would point it out to him. He does many things, but forgets that one thing is needful, and spends a life-time in trifles without any permanent result. We are familiar with the thought that immorality shuns the light and warps the will, and thus darkens knowledge and weakens faith; but we remember too seldom the deadening effect of an unreal and aimless existence which is not truly a life.

**Should be reproved.**—The margin will show that our translators felt a difficulty about this word. See Matt. xviii. 15, where it is rendered "tell him his fault," and comp. the other instances in this Gospel, chap. viii. 9, 45 ("convince" in both), and especially chap. xvi. 8 ("reprove," and margin "convince"). The moral idea is exactly illustrated by the action of light, which makes manifest the wrong, and leads the conscience to see it and repent of it. It is through this chastening, that the man passes from darkness to light. It is because men shrink from this chastening, that they hate

the light. (Comp. the remarkable parallel in Eph. v. 11 *et seq.*)

**(21) He that doeth truth** is opposed to "him that practiseth evil." With fixed purpose he doeth not that which is evil or worthless, but that which, when every veil by which it is hidden from himself or others is removed, remains morally true. Regarding truth as the work of life, he cometh to the light, and though for him too it will be a revelation of sins and errors, and deeds of shame, he hates them the moment he knows them, cuts them from his life at whatever cost, and carries his whole being to the light that it may become really true, and that its true works may be made manifest. He will hate the darkness, for he can have nothing to conceal in it. He will love the light, for everything which it reproves he reproves too, and every ray he can gather from it becomes part of the truth which is his life-work. For the remarkable expression "to do the truth," which, with its opposite "to do a lie" (chap. viii. 44; Rev. xxi. 27; xxii. 15), is common in Rabbinic writers, comp. Job xiii. 6, and 1 John i. 6; and for "walking in truth," comp. 2 John 4, and 3 John 3, 4. In 1 Cor. xiii. 6, "truth" is opposed to "iniquity."

**That they are wrought in God.**—Perhaps better, *because they are wrought in God*. This is the reason of their being made manifest in the light, revealed in the person of Christ. However full

(22) After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judæa ; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.<sup>a</sup>

a ch. 4. 2.

(23) And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there : and they came, and were baptized

the light which had guided men's steps had been, it was still part of the true Light which lighteth every man, and must lead to Him. Every work wrought in God had already bound them in union with Him, and prepared them to receive Him. That Light was in the world, in the Law and Prophets of the Old Testament Scriptures (Matt. v. 17), in the witness of things invisible ever borne by the things that are made (Rom. i. 20), in the law written upon the hearts of men (Rom. ii. 14, 15). As before (verse 19), these words are general, but we may not exclude from them a special meaning. He who spoke them warrants our applying them to characters, like the true Nathanael, in whom there is no guile (chap. i. 47); like the rock-man Peter (chap. i. 42); like the witness John (Matt. xi. 11). Some ground was good when the Sower went forth to sow.

Two thoughts are suggested to us at the close of this first discourse. One is, that the writer, with perfect naturalness, says nothing of the effect on Nicodemus, but leaves the after-glimpses to tell their own tale. (See chaps. vii. 50; xix. 39.) The other is, that we have come upon teaching distinct in style and matter from that of the earlier Gospels. On this see *Excursus E: The Discourses in St. John's Gospel* (p. 436).

(22) After these things.—Not implying that He left Jerusalem at

once. The “land of Judæa” is the province as distinct from the capital. This verse points to a work in Judæa of which we know nothing more. It was probably not confined to one place. We have to think of Christ as continuing his teaching, of large numbers influenced by it (verse 26), and of these as being baptised by the disciples (chap. iv. 2). His converts were the country people, and it is the action of the Pharisees which caused Him to retire to Samaria.

(23) Ænon near to Salim.—The latter place was clearly well known at the time, and regarded as fixing the locality of the former. It has been usual to follow Jerome and Eusebius, who fix the place in the valley of the Jordan, eight miles south from Bethshan, or Scythopolis. (See quotation from the *Onomasticon*, in Caspari, *Chron. and Geogr. Introd.*, Eng. Trans., p. 122.) The objection to this is, that the text seems to limit us to Judæa (comp. chap. iv. 3, 4), whereas this Salim is more than thirty miles from it. The word Ænon means “springs,” and probably belonged to more than one place where “there was much water.” The mention of this is opposed to the locality of the Jordan valley, where it would not be necessary to choose a place for this reason. Dr. Barclay (*City of the Great King*, 1858, pp. 558—570) found both names in a place

<sup>(24)</sup> For John was not yet cast into prison.

<sup>(25)</sup> Then there arose a question between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

<sup>(26)</sup> And they came unto

<sup>a ch. 1. 7.  
34</sup>

John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness,<sup>a</sup> behold, the same baptizeth, and all *men* come to him.

<sup>(27)</sup> John answered and

answering the description, and certainly answering the narrative better than other identifications, at *Wady Farah*, about five miles from Jerusalem.

**They came**—*i.e.*, the people.

<sup>(24)</sup> **Was not yet cast into prison.**—This Judæan ministry, then, preceded the Galilean ministry of the earlier Gospels. (See chap. iv. 3, and Matt. iv. 12.)

<sup>(25)</sup> **Then there arose a question.**—For “the Jews,” the reading of the better MSS. is, *a Jew*. The question arose on the side of John's disciples. What the exact nature of it was we do not know, and have no means of judging. It was one of the questions which in every age has arisen about external rites, and has too often been accompanied by a neglect of inner principles. This arose in some way from the fact of the disciples of Jesus baptising near to the place where John was baptising, and doubtless was closely connected with these baptisms. The fact is only preserved as an incidental introduction to the remarkable testimony of the Baptist which follows.

<sup>(26)</sup> **Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan.**—John's disciples, with a natural attachment to their master, and without the knowledge of what that master's work really was, are jealous of

what seems to them the rival work of Jesus. He had been with John; the Baptist had borne witness to Him. Now He seems to usurp his work, and the throngs which had crowded to the Fore-runner go to Him. (Comp. Notes on chaps. i. 8; iv. 2.)

**Barest witness.**—Better, *hast borne witness*.

<sup>(27)</sup> **A man can receive nothing . . .**—Do these words apply to the Baptist himself, or to Christ? Do they mean “I cannot assume this higher position which you wish to give me, because it is not given me by heaven;” or, “His work, with its influence over men, ought to convince you that His mission is divine?” Expositors have given, now this, now that answer. The immediate connection with verse 26 points to the latter view as the correct one (but see *Alford's Note* on the other side). The power that had shown itself in word and work, teaching as none ever taught before, binding men—aye, some of their own brotherhood—to Himself, convincing men whose minds were open to the truth that He was the very Christ—all this could only have been received from heaven. Did they feel the movement around them? Let them recognise it as divine, and seek to be borne with it. (See Note on chap. vi. 36.)

said, A man can receive<sup>1</sup> nothing,<sup>2</sup> except it be given him from heaven. <sup>(28)</sup> Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ,<sup>b</sup> but that I am sent before him. <sup>(29)</sup> He that hath the bride is the bride-

<sup>1</sup> Or, take unto himself.  
<sup>a</sup> Heb. 5.  
<sup>b</sup>

<sup>2</sup> ch. 1. 20.

groom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. <sup>(30)</sup> He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

<sup>(28)</sup> **Ye yourselves bear me witness.**—They remembered (verse 26) that John had borne witness to Jesus. Did they not remember too what he had said? He had from the first known his own work, and the greater work. Some of his disciples had known it also, and had gone from him to Jesus. This which they see was the necessary result of the truth he had ever declared.

<sup>(29)</sup> **He that hath the bride is the bridegroom.**—This is the only instance in this Gospel where the familiar imagery of an Eastern marriage meets us. (See Matt. ix. 15, where we have the same imagery in the answer of our Lord to these same disciples of John, then taking sides with the Pharisees, on the question of fasting.) The “friend of the bridegroom”—called by the Hebrews “Shôshbén,” and by the Greeks “Paranymph” —was charged with the preliminaries of the marriage. He arranged the contract, acted for the bridegroom during the betrothal, and arranged for, and presided at, the festivities of the wedding-day itself. It was a position of honour, in proportion to the position of the bridegroom himself, and was given to his chief friend. That friend then joyed in his joy, and there was none brighter on

that day than he. This in John's thought is an illustration of his own position. The bridegroom is the Messiah; the bride is the Kingdom of God—the Church, consisting of all who with pure hearts are willing to receive Him; the friend who has arranged the betrothal, who has prepared these hearts, is John himself. He now stands and hears the Bridegroom. Some of those who had been prepared by him for the Bridegroom would have come, it may be, and told him of his words. He is now near at hand. Throngs crowd to Him. The bride is approaching. Do they see in all this matter for envy? It is to him the consummation of all hopes. The life-work has not been in vain. The cup runs over. The joy is fulfilled.

<sup>(30)</sup> **He must increase, but I must decrease.**—The office of the paranymph ceases to exist when the marriage is accomplished. It must be so. So too in the interpretation. His own work was well-nigh done, but he is filled with the joy of having done his work, not with disappointment that it pales before the brightness of the work which is to follow. This is the text of the Forerunner's life. Well will it be for those followers of Christ whose lives shall be sermons on it.

(31) He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth:

he that cometh from heaven is above all. (32) And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no

(31) **He that cometh from above.**—Comp. Note on verse 13, and chap. viii. 23. It is expressed in another form in the last clause of the verse.

**Is above all**—i.e., above all persons, and, as the context limits the sense, specially above all teachers.

**He that is of the earth is earthly.**—This is the right sense, but the force of the words is lessened by not preserving the three-fold “of the earth,” which is in the Greek. “He who is of the earth, of the earth he is, and of the earth he speaketh.” The first marks out the Baptist’s origin, as opposed to Him that cometh from above; the second asserts that the nature is, in accord with this origin, human and limited in faculty, as opposed to that of Him who is above all; the third declares that his teaching is from the standpoint of human nature and limited faculty, embracing indeed divine subjects and receiving divine revelation (chap. i. 33), but having this treasure in earthen vessels, imperfectly realising it, and imperfectly teaching it (verse 33). Then the contrast carries him away from this thought of self, in all its weakness, to dwell on the fulness of the teaching of the perfect Teacher, and he emphatically repeats, with the change of words suggested by “of the earth,” what he has before said of it, “He that cometh from heaven is above all.”

This repetition is the answer to

the jealousy of his disciples, who wished to place him in a position of rivalry with Jesus. It is the answer to all self-assertion on the part of human teachers.

(32) **And what he hath seen and heard.**—This is the opposite of the third point, the speaking of the earth in the last verse. Divine in origin, divine in nature, He is divine in teaching. That teaching, too, is a witness of things seen and heard. (Comp. Notes on chap. vi. 11, 12.) It was a message from the Father’s home, brought by the Son Himself. His own message was but that of a servant who did not fully know its meaning.

**No man receiveth his testimony.**—These words are shown by those which immediately follow to go in their pathos beyond the strict limit of the facts present to his own mind. Yet he may well have said “no man.” Of the crowds that thronged to his own baptism, of those who were then thronging to the baptism of Jesus, how many were there who were receiving like testimony of the things seen and heard? (Comp. again verse 11.) How great the first promise, how bitter the last disappointment, of the Baptist’s life! These words of intense feeling are not to be measured by the cold standard of a formal exactness. And still it may be that the sadness of his tone arises from the fact that of those to whom he speaks, and at the time when he speaks, there was literally no one receiving this testi-

man receiveth his testimony. <sup>(33)</sup> He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is

<sup>a</sup> Rom. 3.  
<sub>4</sub>

true. <sup>a</sup> <sup>(34)</sup> For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by

mony, but all were seeking to make the earthly teacher a rival of the divine. The tense is present; those in the next verse are past.

**(33) He that hath received.**—*Better, he that received.* “Hath set to his seal,” better, *set his seal*. It had been so. Earlier disciples, as Andrew and John (chap. i. 40), had passed from the Forerunner to the Great Teacher, and had heard in His words that which went to the divine in their own spirits, and had come from the short first meeting with the conviction, “We have found the Messiah.” They received the witness, and, as they heard it, they too became witnesses. Just as a man sets his private seal—here, probably, the common Eastern stamp that affixed the name is thought of—and by it attests the truth of a document, so they attested, in the power which that witness had over their lives, their recognition of it as truth. It has always been so. The moral fitness of Christianity to meet the spiritual needs of men, and its moral power over the lives of men in all the varying circumstances of culture, race, and creed, has raised up in every age a holy army of witnesses, who have set their seal to its divine truth. (Comp. for the thought of sealing, chap. vi. 27; Rom. iv. 11; xv. 28; 1 Cor. ix. 2; &c.)

**(34) For he whom God hath sent.**—*Better, he whom God sent.* The acceptance of the witness of things seen and heard is the attestation by the human spirit of the

truthfulness of God, for Jesus is as one sent from God to declare Him. It is the divine image in man which recognises divinity. Every human faculty finds its true work, and true satisfaction, and the true object of its being, in Him; and therefore the whole man knows that His words are true, and recognises that He speaks the words of God. (Comp. 1 John v. 10.)

#### For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

—The italics will show that the words “unto Him” are added in our version; and it is probable that the word “God,” which has been repeated from the first clause of the verse, should be also omitted here. We have then to read, “For He giveth not the Spirit by measure;” or, possibly, “For the Spirit giveth not by measure.” If, however, we remember that John the Baptist is the speaker, and that he had seen “the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and coming upon Him” (see Matt. iii. 16, and comp. such passages as Luke xi. 13, and in this Gospel chaps. xiv. 16, and xv. 26), we shall still interpret the words in the sense which our version gives. The words “by measure,” in the sense of limitation, are frequent in the classical and rabbinical writings. The Rabbis seem to have applied the phrase to prophets and teachers, saying that the Spirit dwelt in the prophets only in a certain measure. Comp. 2 Kings ii. 9, where Elisha prays for “a double portion,” or, more exactly,

measure unto him. (35) The Father loveth the Son,<sup>a</sup> and hath given all things into his hand. (36) He that believeth on the Son hath

<sup>b</sup> Hab. 2:4;  
1 John  
5. 10.  
<sup>a</sup> Matt.  
11. 27.

everlasting life :<sup>b</sup> and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

*a portion of two*—the portion of the first-born son (Deut. xxi. 17)—of the spirit of Elijah. The same thought meets us in St. Paul (himself a pupil of Gamaliel), who speaks of “the self-same Spirit dividing to every man severally as he will” (see 1 Cor. xii. 4—12). The opposite of this thought, then, is before us here. God gives in this case not as in others. The Son who cometh from above is above all. There is no gift of prophet, or of teacher, which is not given to Him. He has the fulness of the spiritual gifts which in part are given to men, and He speaks the very words of God. It will be noted that John is still expounding to his disciples the meaning of his own declaration, “He must increase, but I must decrease.”

(35) **The Father loveth the Son.**—Comp. Matt. xi. 27, which is remarkable as an instance of what we call distinctly Johannine thought and diction in the earlier Gospels. We shall meet the words again in chap. v. 20.

(36) Here too we have, in the words of John, thoughts which we have found already (verses 15, 16), and shall find again (chap. v. 24), in the words of Christ Himself.

**He that believeth not the Son.**—Better, *he that obeyeth not the Son*. The word, which occurs only here in the Gospels, is not the same as that at the beginning of the verse, and shows that the faith there intended is the subjection of the will to the Son, to whom the

Father hath given all things (verse 35). (Comp. “obedience to the faith,” Rom. i. 5.)

**Shall not see life** is contrasted with the present possession of the believer. He has life; the man who disobeys has not, and while he disobeys shall not see life, for he cannot be a subject of a kingdom to whose laws he refuses allegiance. But there is also a fearful positive contrast. There is for him a present possession, which shall also remain.

**The wrath of God abideth on him.**—Once only in the four Gospels does this term, so full of tremendous meaning, meet us, and that in the Gospel of fullest love, and in a context which speaks of the Father’s love to the Son, and of eternal life, which is the portion of all who believe on the Son. It must be so. This wrath (comp. Rom. ii. 8; Eph. iv. 31; Col. iii. 8; Rev. xix. 15) is not the fierceness of passion, nor is it the expression of fixed hatred. It is the necessary aspect of love and holiness, toward those who reject love, and wilfully sin. It is not here spoken of as coming upon them, or as passing from them. It abideth, ever has and ever must; for the wrath of love must abide on hatred, the wrath of holiness must abide on sin. But none need hate, and none need live in wilful sin. “He that believeth”—how vast the love and bright the hope of the all-including words—“hath eternal life !” (Comp. Note on chap. vi. 56.)

## CHAPTER IV.—

<sup>(1)</sup> When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples

A.D. 30.

than John, <sup>(2)</sup> (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) <sup>(3)</sup> he left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee. <sup>(4)</sup> And he

## IV.

## [(3) JESUS MANIFESTS HIMSELF PUBLICLY (continued):]

- (d) *In Samaria (chap. iv. 1—42). The woman of Samaria, and the living water (verses 1—16). The people of Samaria, and the fields white unto harvest (verses 17—42);*
- (e) *In Galilee (chap. iv. 43—54). Received by the people. The courtier's faith.]*

<sup>(1)</sup> When therefore the Lord knew.—The second clause of this verse is given in the exact words of the report which came to the Pharisees: *When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees heard, "Jesus maketh and baptizeth more disciples than John."*

The report which reached John (chap. iii. 26) had come to them also, and the inference from His retirement is that it had excited their hostility. The hour to meet this has not yet come, and He withdraws to make, in a wider circle, the announcement which He has made in the Temple, in Jerusalem, in Judea, and is about to make in Samaria and in Galilee.

<sup>(2)</sup> Though Jesus himself baptized not.—This is a correction, not of the writer's statement, but of the report carried to the Pharisees. The form of the report is quite natural. John did personally baptise, and when mul-

titudes thronged him, it is probable that his disciples assisted. Greater numbers still (chap. iii. 26) were thronging to the baptism administered ministerially by the disciples of Jesus. (Comp. Acts x. 48; xix. 5; 1 Cor. i. 15—17.) They had been drawn to Him by His teaching and miracles in Jerusalem and the country round about, and they spoke of receiving His baptism. But the writer cannot let the report appear in his Gospel without correction. There was a reason which they did not know for the fact that Jesus did not baptise with water, for it was He "which baptiseth with the Holy Spirit" (chap. i. 33), and this power His disciples had not yet received (chap. vii. 39).

<sup>(3)</sup> Again.—This word is almost certainly part of the original text, though it is not found in some MSS. Its omission is due to a difficulty of interpretation. What is the previous return into Galilee? The only one mentioned in this Gospel is that of chap. i. 43. We have had another note of time in chap. iii. 24, from which we learn that this Judæan period of the ministry preceded the imprisonment of John, and therefore the commencement of the Galilean ministry recorded in Matt. iv. 12 and Mark i. 14. This second return, then, is the starting-point of the history of our Lord's work in Galilee as told by the earlier Gospels.

<sup>(4)</sup> He must needs go

must needs go through Samaria. <sup>(5)</sup> Then cometh he

to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to

**through Samaria**—*i.e.*, following the shortest and most usual road, and the one we find Him taking from Galilee to Jerusalem (Luke ix. 52). Josephus spoke of this as the customary way of the Galileans going up during the feasts at Jerusalem (*Ant.* xx. 6, § 1). The Pharisees, indeed, took the longer road through Peræa, to avoid contact with the country and people of Samaria, but it is within the purpose of His life and work (“needs go,” *i.e.*, was necessary that *He should go*) to teach in Samaria, as in Judaea, the principles of true religion and worship, which would cut away the foundations of all local jealousies and feuds, and establish for all nations the spiritual service of the universal Father (verses 21—24).

(5) The “Samaria” of this chapter is the province into which the older kingdom had degenerated, and which took its name from the capital city. This was the Shomeron built by Omri, on a hill purchased from Shemer (1 Kings xvi. 23, 24). The city was given by Augustus to Herod the Great, who rebuilt it, and called it after the Emperor, Sebaste, a name which survives in the modern village *Sebastiā*.

Sychar involves questions of greater uncertainty. The reading may be regarded as beyond doubt, the attempts to substitute “Sychem,” or “Sichem,” being obviously made to avoid the topographical difficulty. The older geographers, followed by many modern commentators, suppose the word to be an intentional variation of the word Sychem, by which the

Jews expressed their contempt for the city of the Samaritans, the sound being very nearly that of the Hebrew words for “lie” and “drunken.” Others suppose the change of termination is a natural dialectic variation. (Comp. *Ben*, the Hebrew for son, as in *Benjamin*, Gen. xxxv. 18, which in the later language became *Bar*, as in *Simon Bar-jona*, Matt. xvi. 17.) These explanations assume that Sychar is the same place as Shechem; but it is very improbable that St. John would have spoken of a city so well known as Shechem with the prefix “which is called,” or would have thought it necessary to define it as “near to the parcel of ground. . . .” The only other places with the same prefix are Ephraim (chap. xi. 54), the Pavement (chap. xix. 13), and Golgotha (chap. xix. 17), but in the latter instances, as in the mention of Thomas called Didymus (chaps. xi. 16, xx. 24), the words do not imply a soubriquet (comp. Farrar, *Life of Christ*, i. 206, note, and Grove in Smith’s *Dictionary of Bible*, “Sychar”), but are a citation of the names in Hebrew and Greek, for the benefit of Greek readers. To assert that Sychar is meant to convey a double meaning is to imply that this would be understood by readers for whom it is necessary to translate Gabbatha and Golgotha, Thomas and Cephas (chap. i. 42), for whom Messias has been rendered in Greek in chap. i. 41, and is to be again in this very discourse (verse 25). Shechem, moreover, was then known by the Greek name Neapolis, which has

the parcel of ground that

Jacob gave to his son

become the present *Naplûs* (see Ewald *in loc.*, and comp. Jos. Wars, iv.), and this name would have been as natural in this Gospel as, e.g., Tiberias, which is found in it only (chaps. vi. 1, 23, and xxi. 1). Nor can it be said that Shechem was near to Jacob's well, for admitting that the old city extended considerably "farther eastward than at present," it must still have been more than a mile distant.

As early as the fourth century, Sychar was distinguished from Shechem by Eusebius, Jerome, and the Bordeaux Pilgrim, and the name also occurs in the Talmud. (See quotations in Wieseler's *Synopsis*, p. 231 of the Eng. Trans.) It is still found in the modern village *Askar*, about half a mile north from Jacob's well. A plan and description of the neighbourhood, by Dr. Rosen, Prussian Consul at Jerusalem, appeared in the *Journal of the German Oriental Society* (xiv. 634), and the results of this are now accessible to the English reader in the translation of Caspari's *Introduction* (p. 124). (Comp. Dr. Thomson's *The Land and the Book*, chap. xxxi.) The identification is accepted by Ewald, Godet, and Lüthardt, among modern writers. Mr. Grove (Art. "Sychar," as above) inclines to it, but, as he says, "there is an etymological difficulty. . . . 'Askar begins with the letter 'Ain, which Sychar does not appear to have contained; a letter too stubborn and enduring to be easily either dropped or assumed in a name.' One is tempted to think it possible that this 'Ain is the first letter of

the word for Spring or Fountain, the plural of which occurs in *Ænon*, in chap. iii. 23, and that 'A-Sychar (well of Sychar) = 'Askar.

**The parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.** —The reference is to the blessing of Joseph in Gen. xlvi. 22, which is translated by Kalisch, "And I give to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I take out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow." The patriarch is confident that he will, in his posterity, drive out the Amorite and possess the land promised him by God (verses 4 and 21). In that land there is a portion where Abraham had raised his first altar, and received the first promise that his seed should possess that land (Gen. xii. 6, 7) That portion had been his own first halting-place on his return from Padan-aram; and he, too, had erected an altar there, in a parcel of a field where his tent rested, which he bought for a hundred pieces of money, and made it sacred to El, the God of Israel (Gen. xxxiii. 18—20). It comes to his mind now, when in the last days of his life he looks on to the future and back to the past, and he gives it to his own and Rachel's son. The Hebrew word here used for portion is "Shechem" (*Shekhem*), and this, as the proper names in the following chapter, has, and is meant to have, a double meaning. The Greek of the LXX. could not preserve this play upon the words, and rendered it by the proper name *Sikima*, understanding that the portion referred to was that at Shechem.

Joseph.<sup>a</sup> <sup>(6)</sup> Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about

<sup>a</sup> Gen. 33.  
19, & 48.  
22; Jos.  
24. 32.

the sixth hour. <sup>(7)</sup> There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. <sup>(8)</sup> (For his disciples

This the children of Israel understood too, for they gave this region to Ephraim (Josh. xvi.), and the parcel of ground became the resting-place for the bones of Joseph (Josh. xxiv. 32, 33).

<sup>(9)</sup> Jacob's well is one of the few spots about the position of which all travellers are agreed. Jesus, passing from south to west, would pass up the valley of *Mochna* until the road turns sharp to the west, to enter the valley of Sichem between Ebal and Gerizim. Here is Jacob's field, and in the field is Jacob's well. It is dug in the rock, and is about nine feet in diameter. The older travellers described it as more than 100 feet deep, and with several feet of water. Modern travellers have generally found it dry. Wilson describes it, in 1843, as only 75 feet deep.

**Sat thus on the well.**—*Better, was sitting thus at the well.* The words are one of the instances of exact knowledge which meets us in this Gospel. The tense is the descriptive imperfect. He was thus sitting when the woman came. He thus recalls the picture as it was impressed and remained fixed in the writer's mind. He saw Him, wearied by the noon tide journey, sitting thus by the well, while they went on to the city to procure food. The reality of this fatigue, as one of the instances witnessing to the reality of His human nature, is important.

**About the sixth hour**—*i.e.,*

as elsewhere in St. John, following the ordinary mode of counting, about 12 o'clock. (Comp. Note on chap. i. 39.) It is contended, on the other hand, that this was not the usual time for women to resort to the wells to draw water, but the narrative perhaps implies an unusual hour as it speaks of only one woman there.

<sup>(7)</sup> **Of Samaria**—*i.e.,* of the country (verse 1), not of the city, which was nine miles farther north. She was of the people inhabiting the valley between Ebal and Gerizim, not, like Himself, a chance passenger by the well. The contrast is at once drawn between him, a Jew and a man, and her, of Samaria and a woman.

**Give me to drink** is the almost always asked and almost never refused favour as the traveller meets the native by the well-side. He was wearied by the heat of the journey, and seeks the ordinary refreshment.

<sup>(8)</sup> **For** introduces His reason for asking this favour of her. The disciples had gone on. He was alone, and without the means of getting water for Himself (verse 11).

**Meat.**—*Better, food,* as the former word is misleading in modern English. See Gen. i. 29, 30, and Deut. xx. 20, where herbs and fruits are termed "meat." It will be remembered that the meat-offering did not consist of flesh, but of flour and oil and ears of corn (Lev. ii.).

were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)<sup>(9)</sup> Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with

the Samaritans.<sup>(10)</sup> Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living

<sup>(9)</sup> Woman of Samaria (twice).—Better, *Samaritan woman*. In both cases the Greek has the adjective. It is the religious and national position as a Samaritan which is prominent in this verse.

**Being a Jew.**—This she would know from dress and language. It has been noted that the Hebrew for “Give me to drink,” “Teni lish’koth,” contains the letter Sin, or Shin, which was one of the distinctive points in the Ephraimite pronunciation. They did not say Shibboleth, but Sibboleth (*Judges xii. 5, 6*). They would not say “Teni lish’koth,” but “Teni lise-koth.”

**For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.**—The original has not the articles, *For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans*. This is a remark made by the writer to explain the point of the woman’s question. She wondered that a Jew, weary and thirsty though he might be, should speak to her. For the origin of the Samaritans, see 2 Kings xvii. 24–41, and Luke ix. 52. The later Jewish authors abound in terms of reproach for them—e.g., “He who eats the bread of a Samaritan is as he who eats swine’s flesh;” “No Samaritan shall be made a proselyte;” “They have no share in the resurrection of the

dead” (*Pirke*, Rabbi Elieser, 38; comp. Farrar, *Life of Christ*, i. 209, note). Jesus Himself speaks of a Samaritan as an alien (*Luke xvii. 16, 18*; comp. x. 33), and is called a Samaritan and possessed of a devil (comp. chap. viii. 48). But the strictest Jews allowed exceptions to the forbidden intercourse. If bread was interdicted, fruit and vegetables were not; if boiled eggs were forbidden, fresh ones were not. At no time probably did the Galileans follow the practice of the Judæans in this matter, and hence they go to the city to buy food, while the woman asks this question of a Jew whom she met on the road from Jerusalem. Later, it was only “because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem” that the Samaritan village did not receive Him; and it is the Evangelist of the Jerusalem ministry, who would have called down fire from heaven then, who adds this note of explanation for his Greek readers now (*Luke ix. 52, 53*).

<sup>(10)</sup> **If thou knewest the gift of God.**—Expositors differ very widely as to the meaning to be given to “the gift of God” and “living water.” See, e.g., the summaries of views in the notes of Meyer and Godet, both of which are now translated into English. Yet there can be little doubt of the

water. <sup>(11)</sup> The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that

living water? <sup>(12)</sup> Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children,

true meaning if we observe the turn given to her question by the emphatic pronouns, "Thou wouldest have asked of *Him*." You stand by this deep well that for centuries has been God's gift of refreshment to man and beast; you have the means of drawing the water, and are thus the apparent benefactor to Him who asks for your aid. It is not really so. There is a deep well of spiritual truth in communion with God, as necessary for man's true life as water is for the natural life. I stand here with the means to draw, with the power to enter the depths hidden from man, and reveal to your spirit the Being of God. It is really you that are the traveller in the journey of life, weary with the burning heat of its trials, and travel-stained by the sins through which you have passed, thirsting in the hopes and fears of that spirit that cannot rest apart from God, helpless at the very side of the well, for the Eternal is ever near you, and you know Him not. If you knew this gift of God, and knew Who it is that is now here to reveal it to you, you would have asked, and He would have given you that Spirit, which would have been in you as a fountain of living water.

<sup>(11)</sup> The woman saith unto him, Sir . . . —Her tone changes to one of respect. Something in His voice and manner, it may be, has touched her. She does not understand His words, but she is

conscious of their latent force. She feels the presence of One who teaches with authority, and the "Thou, being a Jew" passes to the reverential "Sir." Still, she does not see how He can give her living water. Where will he get it? He has no means for drawing it, and the water in the well is far below His reach. His word, too, strikes her, and she dwells on it;—"that living water." She thinks of spring water, as in Gen. xxvi. 19, and Lev. xiv. 5, where the Hebrew is "living water." He cannot draw from that well. Does He mean to say that He knows of another, with better water? The word used here for "well" is different from that in verse 6, where the surface was only thought of. Here, and in the next verse, the depth is prominent, and we have the same word, which is rendered "pit," in Luke xiv. 5.

<sup>(12)</sup> Art thou greater . . . ? —Again, the pronoun is the emphatic word, "Thou surely art not greater." "The well used to satisfy the wants of the patriarch, and his household, and his flocks, and has come down from him to us. It is surely sufficient for all our wants." This claim of Jacob as their father was through Ephraim and Joseph, and the well was part of "the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph" (verse 5). There was abundance of water near to it, but a patriarchal household could not depend for a

and his cattle? <sup>(13)</sup> Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: <sup>(14)</sup> but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that

I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. <sup>(15)</sup> The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. <sup>(16)</sup> Jesus saith unto

necessity of life upon neighbours who may be hostile, and Jacob had dug this well in his own purchased plot. It was sacred, then, as the very spot where their asserted ancestor had digged his well and built his altar. There was an unbroken continuity in the history of the place, and it was prized the more because it was not so in the history of the people.

<sup>(13), (14)</sup> **Whosoever drinketh of this water.**—Jesus does not answer her question, but asserts the universal recurrence of thirst, after even the water of Jacob's well, to lead her to the thought that His "living water" is something widely different.

<sup>(14)</sup> **The water that I shall give him.**—These words are emphatic as opposed to "*this water*." It is not an external supply, which must be sought to meet the recurring physical want, but it is the inner never-failing source, the fountain of living water, which satisfies every want as it occurs. He who has it, therefore, can never thirst. Coming from the source of all life, it issues in eternal life. (Comp. Notes on chap. vii. 37, 38.)

<sup>(15)</sup> **Come hither.**—The Sinaitic and Vatican and some other MSS. read, "come through hither," or as Alford, who adopts the reading, renders it, "come all the way

hither." Godet also adopts the reading, but renders it, in the service of a forced explanation, "pass by here," thinking that the woman was on her way home from work at meal-time, and that this accounts for her presence at the well at noon. He regards this as *sans doute*, but the reading itself is at least uncertain, and is probably to be explained by its first syllable being added from the last syllable of the previous word; and the translation is more than uncertain.

The woman understands the words in their physical sense. How many a toilsome hour, how many a weary journey would she be saved!

<sup>(16)</sup> **Go, call thy husband.**—She has asked for this living water. She knows not that the well must first be dug. In the depth of her spirit there is a power of life; but like the source of a spring, it is hidden. Many a hard rock of impenitence was there, and many a layer of every-day transgression, and many a habit once formable as clay, now hard as adamant, and many a deposit of carnal thought which had left nothing but its dregs behind. All this must be dug through before she can have the living water, and this well, too, must be deep. The command, "Go, call thy husband," is the first stroke

her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. <sup>(17)</sup> The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: <sup>(18)</sup> for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is

not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. <sup>(19)</sup> The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. <sup>(20)</sup> Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to wor-

breaking up the surface of that fair appearance, and revealing the foulness of the life beneath it.

<sup>(17)</sup> **I have no husband.**—The stroke has left its mark. It lays bare to her own consciousness the past and present life, but she does not know that it is laid bare to His. The reply is no longer prefaced by the half-sarcastic “Thou, being a Jew,” or the reverential “Sir.” The tone has passed from vivacity to earnestness, and from earnestness to sadness. That one word—what a history it has revealed! But she will hide it from Him and from herself. “I have no husband” (or, according to the Sinaitic MS., more emphatically still, *A husband I have not*).

<sup>(18)</sup> **In that saidst thou truly.**—The stroke goes deeper. It lays bare the secrets of all those years over which she thought the veil of the past had for ever been drawn. The bright days of joy and dark days of sin; the heart’s promises made and broken; the sad days of death, which five times over had robbed her of a husband; or, worse than death, the sin which had severed the sacred bonds; the shame of the present shameless life—all these are at least hidden from a stranger. But His words pierce to the inmost thoughts, and prove

Him to know all the acts of her life (verse 29). “Thou hast well said, A husband I have not. The holy name may not be given to the paramour thou now hast; with the loss of purity is linked the loss of truthfulness; the very truth thou utterest is meant to convey to Me an untruth, but to One who knows all, the words are really true;—“in that saidst thou truly.”

<sup>(19)</sup> But who can it be who thus enters her mind and reads the pages of her memory as if it were a book? He must be as one of those of olden time of whom she has heard. The tone of reverence prevails again, “Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.”

<sup>(20)</sup> **Our fathers worshipped.**—She gives a sudden turn to the conversation. It is not that the question of worship is the all-engrossing problem of her mind, for which she seeks solution at this prophet’s hands. Such questions hardly came then within the circle of a Samaritan woman’s thoughts, and this woman’s life had not been such as to make her an exception to the rule; but the heart, quivering before the eye that reads it as it never before had read itself, shrinks from the light that is let in upon it. She will speak of anything rather than of self. There is the mountain

ship.<sup>a</sup> (21) Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me,

<sup>a</sup> Deut. 12. 5.

the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this moun-

overhanging them, the theme of many a discussion between Samaritan and Jew; she will ask the prophet to decide that question.

(21) **Woman** (comp. Note on ii. 4), **believe me, the hour cometh.** —Better, *there cometh an hour*. The Authorised version of the latter clause gives the correct sense, if it is punctuated as follows: “When ye shall, neither in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father;” “when ye shall worship, but without the limitation of holy places; when ye shall worship the Father of mankind, before whom Jew, and Samaritan, and Gentile are brethren.” Both these thoughts are suggested by her words. She had referred in the past tense to the worship on Gerizim, when for more than a century and a half the temple had been in ruins, but she refers in the present to the temple at Jerusalem, where the form of worship was every day gone through. From that temple He had just come. The ruins of the one are before Him, the ruins of the other are present to His thoughts (chap. ii. 18—22). Both centres of local worship are to cease. She had referred more than once to the claim which arose from direct descent from the patriarch (verses 12—20). But the Father is God, and the hour coming, and then present (verse 23), in Christ’s mission, had the Fatherhood of God and the sonship of humanity as its message to the world.

**In this mountain.**—Sychar was between Ebal and Gerizim, and she would point out the holy mountain with the ruins of the temple then in sight.

The contrast between “our fathers” and the emphatic “ye” carries back the thoughts to the rival temple and worship on Mount Gerizim from the time of Nehemiah. The enmity took its rise in the refusal to accept the help of the Samaritans in the restoration of the temple at Jerusalem (Ezra iv. 2; comp. 2 Kings xvii. 24 *et seq.*). The next step is recorded in Neh. xiii. 28. Manasseh, the son of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, had married a daughter of Sanballat, and was chased from Jerusalem. Sanballat thereupon supported his son-in-law in establishing a rival worship, but it is not clear that the temple was built until a century later, in the time of Alexander the Great. The authority for the details of the history is Josephus (*Ant.* xi. 8, § 2), but he seems to confuse Sanballat the Persian satrap with Sanballat the Horonite. In any case, from the erection of the temple on Mount Gerizim, the schism was complete. The temple was destroyed by John Hyrcanus, about b.c. 129 (*Ant.* xiii. 9, § 1), but the mountain on which it stood continued to be, and is to this day, the holy place of the Samaritans. All travellers in the Holy Land describe their Passover, still eaten on this mountain in accordance with the ritual of the Pentateuch. They claimed that this mountain, and not Jerusalem, was the true scene of the sacrifice of Isaac, and Gentile tradition marked it out as the meeting-place with Melchizedek (Euseb. *Præp. Evang.* ix. 22). In accordance with their claim, they had changed in

tain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. <sup>(22)</sup> Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

<sup>(23)</sup> But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seek-

every instance the reading of the Pentateuch, "God will choose a spot" (Deut. xii. 14; xviii. 6, &c.), into "He has chosen," i.e., Gerizim. "Ebal," in Deut. xxvii. 4, had become "Gerizim," and the Ten Commandments in Exodus and Deuteronomy are followed by an interpolated command to erect an altar in Mount Gerizim. Jerusalem, on the other hand, had never once been named in the Pentateuch, which was the only part of the Jewish canon which they accepted. It was but a modern city in comparison with the claim that Gerizim was a holy place from the time of Abraham downwards.

<sup>(22)</sup> **For salvation is of the Jews.**—This verse has sorely tried critics who seek to construct the Gospel out of their judgments of what it should be. It can be no difficulty to those who seek to form their judgments from the Gospel as it is. Assume that the Gospel belongs to the Greek thought of the close of the second century, and the verse must be omitted, though it is certainly part of the original text; accept the Gospel as belonging to the Hebrew thought of the first century, and this touch of Jewish theology is in entire harmony with it. The contrast between the Samaritan and the Jewish worship lay in its history, its state at that time, and its rejection of the fuller teaching of the prophetic books of the Old Testament. "In every

way the Jews had much advantage, but chiefly that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Little as they knew the treasure they possessed, they were the guardians of spiritual truth for the world, and in a sense deeper than they could fathom, "salvation was of the Jews." (Comp. Rom. iii. 2; ix. 4, 5; Isa. ii. 3; Mic. iv. 2.)

The "we" of this verse is in answer to the "ye" of verse 20. She identifies Him with those who claim Jerusalem as the place of worship. That "ye" contained its own answer. In using it she had said that the Messiah was of the Jews.

<sup>(23)</sup> **But the hour cometh.**—Better, as in verse 21, *but there cometh an hour*. He adds to this thought what He could not add to the previous one, "and now is." Local worship was not yet giving way to spiritual; but a band of true worshippers was being gathered, and some were then following Him.

**The true worshippers.**—Her distinction of place was of the accident, but the essence was the nature of the worship. What could any worship be to a God who saw the impurity of the heart, and the contradiction of thought and word? What could *she* know of the worship of which she speaks? Yes; and the temple at Jerusalem was a house of merchandise, instead of one of prayer; what did priest and Levite, scribe and Pharisee, know of true worship?

eth such to worship him.

<sup>(24)</sup> God is a Spirit: <sup>a</sup> and <sup>a 2 Cor. 3.  
17.</sup> they that worship him must

**In spirit and in truth.**—The link between human nature and the divine is in the human spirit, which is the shrine of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. vi. 19). All true approach to God must therefore be in spirit. (Comp. Rom. i. 9 and Eph. vi. 18.) Place, and time, and words, and postures, and sounds, and all things from without, are important only in so far as they aid in abstraction from the sensible world, and in elevation of the spirit within. The moment they distract they hinder true worship. Ritual cannot be discussed without risk of spiritual loss. The words "in truth," already expressed in true worshippers, and repeated in the following verse, are more than "truly." Sincerity is not a test of acceptable worship, though it is a requisite. Bigots sincerely think they do God's service. Worship which is "in truth" is in harmony with the nature of the God whom we worship. To think of God in hearing His truth, to kindle the soul by hymns of praise, to realise the earlier portions of collects and prayers which utter His attributes, are necessary to the truth of the petitions, and thanksgivings, and adorations of worship. The model prayer of Christianity brings home to the heart the Fatherhood of God in its first words.

**For the Father seeketh such to worship him.**—Better, for such the Father also seeketh His worshippers to be. The word "such," i.e., of this character, is emphatic. The "also" expresses that the worship, on the part of the true worshippers, is in accord-

ance with the divine will: "the Father also (on His part) . . ." The reader will not fail to note the emphasis in this reply on the word "Father" (verse 21, and twice in this verse). This name of God, which we teach children to lisp in earliest years, came to her, it may be, now for the first time. He is not Vengeance to be appeased, nor Power to be dreaded, but Love to be received. (Comp. Note on chap. iii. 16.) It is when men learn to think of God as Father that merely local and material worship must cease. The universal desire and practice of worship is the witness to a universal object of worship. The yearning of the human spirit is that of a child seeking the author of his being. The seeking is not human only. The Father also seeketh His child, and seeth him when he is a great way off (Luke xv. 20).

**(24) God is a Spirit.**—Better, God is spirit. His will has been expressed in the seeking. But His very nature and essence is spirit, and it follows from this that all true worship must be spiritual. The appeal is here made to a doctrine of special prominence in the Samaritan theology. They had altered a number of passages in the Pentateuch, which seemed to them to speak of God in language properly applicable to man, and to ascribe to him human form and feelings. But to believe in the spiritual essence of God contained its own answer both as to place and mode of worship.

The second "Him" ("they that worship Him") should be omitted, as the italics show.

in truth. (25) The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. (26) Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *he*.

(27) And upon this came

his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

(28) The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, (29) Come, see

(25) **I know that Messias cometh.**—She is puzzled by these new doctrines. “Father!” “Spirit!” what did all this mean? Was God in any real sense like the father who in childhood’s happy days had protected, and forgiven, and loved? Was the divine nature in any real sense approached by human nature in its highest and best moments, when it seemed lifted above earth, and things of the earth? Was there for her a Father who could still forgive, a Spirit whom her spirit could still love, and in the grasp of that love lift itself to virtue and truth? How different are His words to any she has ever heard before! She, as others, feels half unconsciously their power. Her answer is also a question. He, whom her countrymen called “The Converter,” or “The Returner,” and expected from such passages as Gen. xlix. 10 and Deut. xviii. 15, and whom the Hebrews called “Messias,” and Hellenists called “Christ,” would come, and with Him the answer to every question. She uses the present tense, “Messias cometh.” Can it be that He stands before her now? (Comp. verse 29.)

(26) **I that speak unto thee.**—The announcement is being

made. The solution of some of the problems which she connects with the Messianic advent is contained in the very words she has heard.

**Am he**—i.e., the Messiah. (Comp. especially Notes on chap. viii. 24, 58.)

(27) **With the woman.**—Better, probably, *with a woman*. They are surprised, not at His talking with a Samaritan, but at His talking in public with a woman, which was directly contrary to the Rabbinic precepts. The words of the Law were to be burnt rather than taught to a woman. A man should not speak in public to his own wife. They would like to ask Him, as He asked some of them (chap. i. 38), what He sought to learn from her, or else to know what truth He would teach her (comp. “speakest” with “I that speak,” in the last verse); but there is already a sense of the reverence due to Him, which checks the question as it rises to the lip.

(28) **The woman then left her waterpot.**—The waterpot left behind was a pledge of her return; and it is to us a mark of the presence of him who has related the incidents.

(29) **Is not this the Christ?**—*Better, is this the Christ?* She

a man, which told me all things that ever I did : is not this the Christ ?  
 (30) Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

(31) In the mean while his disciples prayed him,

saying, Master, eat. (32) But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. (33) Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat ? (34) Jesus saith unto them, My meat

felt that He was a prophet when His words revealed her past life (verse 19). She has had the thought of Christ present to her mind when He teaches the nature of true worship (verse 25). She has heard that He is the Messiah from His own lips (verse 26); but she does not frame her question so as to expect the answer "Yes :" she states the fact of His knowing the life, known perhaps to many of them, and leaves them to form their own judgment.

(30) **Came unto him.**—Literally, *were coming unto Him*. They were still on the way when the conversation in verses 31—38 took place. The general expectation of the Messiah, and the receptive spirit of the Samaritans, is shown in her alacrity to go and tell the men of the place, and in their desire at once to see Him for themselves. Many, indeed, were convinced by her statement only (verses 39, 40).

(31) **Master.**—The Hebrew word Rabbi has been preserved in the earlier passages (chaps. i. 38, 49; iii. 2, 26), and will meet us again in vi. 25. It is less ambiguous than the English word, and should be restored here and in chaps. ix. 2 and xi. 28.

They had left Him weary by the side of the well (verse 6), and had

gone to the town. They now return with the food they had obtained, and ask Him to partake of it.

(32) **I have meat to eat that ye know not of.**—The emphasis is on the pronouns, which are opposed to each other. "Meat" is better rendered *food* (see Note on verse 8). The Greek word here is the same as in chap. vi. 27, 55.

(33) **Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat ?**—The question expects the negative answer, "Surely no one hath brought Him anything to eat ?" The only person with Him is this Samaritan woman. Surely she has not ! They understand His words in the ordinary sense. He proceeds to explain their real meaning.

(34) **My meat.**—Better, *My food*, as before (verse 8).

**To do the will . . . to finish.**—Better, *that I may do the will, . . . that I may finish*. These verbs point out the end which He ever kept in view. In some of the best MSS., and in the Received text, the tenses are different. That I may be constantly doing the will of Him that sent Me, and may then at last complete His work. (Comp. chap. xvii. 4.)

This work He speaks of here, and in verse 32, as actual food, as the supply of the truest needs, and

is to do the will of him  
that sent me, and to finish  
his work. <sup>(35)</sup> Say not ye,  
There are yet four months,  
and *then* cometh harvest?  
behold, I say unto you,

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 9.  
37.

Lift up your eyes, and look  
on the fields; for they are  
white already to harvest.  
<sup>(36)</sup> And he that reapeth re-  
ceiveth wages, and gather-  
eth fruit unto life eternal:

the satisfaction of the truest desires of His nature (Matt. iv. 4). Analogies to this are within the limits of every man's experience, and, faint as they are, help us to learn something of what this spiritual sustenance was. The command of duty, the cheering power of hope, the stimulus of success, are forces that supply to weak and weary nerves and muscles the vigour of a new life. Under them the soldier can forget his wounds, the martyr smile at the lion or the flame, the worn-out traveller still plod onward at the thought of home. We cannot analyse this power, but it exists. They have food to eat that those without know not of.

<sup>(35)</sup> Say not ye, There are yet four months.—The emphasis in this verse should be laid upon "ye." It follows immediately out of the contrast between the natural and spiritual food. Every outer fact is the sign of an inner truth. They here, as the woman in verse 11, as the teacher of Israel (chap. iii. 4), as the Jews (chap. ii. 20), speak in the language of the outer facts only. He speaks of the spiritual realities. Looking on the fields of springing corn, they would say that in four months there would be harvest. He sees signs of life springing up from seed sown in receptive hearts; and eyes lifted up and directed to the wide fields of the world's nations would see that the fulness of time

was come, and that the fields were even now white to harvest. The Samaritans coming to Him are as the firstfruits, the earnest of the abundant sheaves which shall follow.

**Four months.**—This gives us probably a note on time. There is no evidence that it was a proverbial saying, and the form of the sentence is against the supposition. The legal beginning of harvest was fixed (Lev. xxiii. 10; Deut. xvi. 9) for the 16th of Nisan (April). This would give us in that year, which was a Jewish leap-year, with a month added (Wieseler's *Synopsis*, Eng. Trans., p. 187), some time about the middle of the month Tebeth (January) as the date of this conversation. (Comp. chap. v. 1.) For the idea of the harvest, comp. Matt. ix. 36—38, and the parable of the Sower, Matt. xiii. 3 et seq.

<sup>(36)</sup> **And he that reapeth.**—The wages of the reaper is the joy—the greatest that the heart can know—of gathering others, as men gather corn into the garner, into eternal life. The sower is Christ Himself, whose words have been the seed in the woman's heart, already bringing forth a harvest in those who are coming to Him. The reapers are the disciples. In this harvest day they would learn, from sympathy with the souls of others, the joy of the reaper, and in that joy it was ordained that

that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. <sup>(37)</sup> And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another

reapeth. <sup>(38)</sup> I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

sower and reaper should rejoice together.

<sup>(37)</sup> **H**erein is that saying true—i.e., in the deeper sense of the word true (comp. Note on chap. i. 9)—has its realisation; is ideally true. The proverb itself was known both to the Greeks and to the Romans (see examples in Schöttgen and Lampe), but the reference is probably to the Old Testament Scriptures. Those who heard it would certainly think of such passages as Deut. vi. 11, or Isa. lxv. 21, 22. The saying expressed something of the bitterness of human disappointment, which in darker moments all men have felt. They have sown in hopes and plans and works, which have never sprung above the surface, or have been reaped in their results by other men; or they themselves have passed away before the harvest has come. This is as men see it, but this is not the ideal truth. The saying is realised in the relation between sower and reaper, which was true then, and holds true of every sower who really sows the good seed. He, too, has a daily work and a daily sustenance in the will of Him that sent him. In the inner consciousness of that work being done, and the hope of its completion, he has food no less real than that of him who reaps the harvest. That he stands alone is the result of his rising above his generation; that he is little understood, or re-

warded, by those for whom he works, will be a disappointment to his friends, but, in his truest thoughts, not to himself. His satisfaction will be hard for men to understand. “Surely no one has brought him to eat!” “I have food to eat that ye know not of.” Men smile at this as sentiment or enthusiasm; but this food has been the strength of the best lives, and noblest deeds, of humanity.

<sup>(38)</sup> **I** sent you to reap . . . —The pronouns are again emphatic. “*I sent you to reap;*” and the statement is of wide meaning. He is ever *the Sower*. All others are more or less fully reapers, though in the degree in which they really reap they will become likened unto Him, and will become sowers too. We all inherit from the past the greatest part of our mental and spiritual knowledge. The child of to-day knows more than the philosopher of an earlier age.

**O**ther men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.—Or, *others have laboured*. In the immediate application to the present case, the “*others*” is to be interpreted of Christ Himself, who had been sowing during their absence, and it may be of the woman who has sown this seed by her testimony to the Samaritans. Or the plural may be chosen as in contrast with the plural *ye*, and as pointing to the general truth, while the immediate reference is to Christ only.

(39) And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. (40) So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he

abode there two days. (41) And many more believed because of his own word; (42) and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard *him* ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

(39) **Many of the Samaritans of that city believed.**—The willingness to receive the truth on the part of the Samaritans is contrasted with the rejection of it on the part of the Jews. They refused the witness of a great prophet; these accept the witness of a woman. Their minds were prepared by the general expectation of the Messiah; and this woman witnesses that Jesus had revealed to her the whole past of her life. There is here a sign they do not question.

(40) **When the Samaritans were come.**—The next step in their faith is to go to Him and ask Him to remain with them, that they too may learn from Him; and He, a Jew, accepts the hospitality of Samaria, and abides with them for two days.

(41) **And many more believed.**—The veil is left upon those two days, as upon so many days in the life of Christ. We know how much was said at the well in a few minutes, and that many believed on Him in a few hours. What questions they must have asked! What truths He must have taught during this sojourn! How that central truth of the Fatherhood of God and the brother-

hood of man must have burned in the hearts of this mixed and despised people! Salvation was of the Jews, and they were from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim. But Fatherhood is a truth for every heart of man, and He who thus linked heaven and earth was the Saviour of the world. We know not what words passed from them to Him, from Him to them; but we know that the result was that many more believed, and that those who before believed on testimony passed to the higher faith of personal conviction.

(42) **We have heard him ourselves.**—The “Him” is not part of the original text, and the sentence is more forcible without it: *We have ourselves heard.* Probably “the Christ” should also be regarded as no part of the original text, and the last clause should be, *and know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.* The result of their hearing is that they know. There is here, as frequently in St. John, stress laid upon the development of faith. We shall find it again in the following verses, which mark it in the case of the courtier.

(43) Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee. (44) For Jesus himself testified,<sup>a</sup> that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. (45) Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilæans received him, having seen

<sup>a</sup> Matt.  
13. 57.

<sup>b</sup> ch. 2. 1.

<sup>1</sup> Or,  
courtier,  
or, ruler.

all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

(46) So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine.<sup>b</sup> And there was a certain nobleman,<sup>1</sup> whose son was sick

(43) **Two days.**—Literally, *the two days*. It is the time mentioned in verse 40, not a second period of two days.

(44) **A prophet hath no honour.**—The statement that a prophet hath no honour in his own country is at first thought a strange explanation of the fact that He went into Galilee, and that the Galileans received Him; and the common geographical solutions, as that “His own country” means Judæa, or Nazareth, as distinct from Galilee, or the district of the so-called Lower Galilee, are brought to, not from, the text. The narrative of the earlier Gospels places the commencement of the ministry in Galilee. John has in these opening chapters told of an earlier ministry in Judæa and Samaria. He now records the reception in Galilee to which this earlier ministry had been the real introduction. Jesus Himself said so. He knew the principle that a prophet’s own friends are the last to hear his message, and He came to His own country only when that message had been received by many in Judæa and Samaria, and when His own countrymen had seen and known His work at the Passover. Others had received him at Jerusalem, and they therefore receive Him in Galilee. The

honour is brought from without. It does not arise in His own country.

(45) **All the things that he did.**—See the reference in chap. ii. 23 to the unrecorded work at Jerusalem.

(46) **So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee.**—He returns to the place where He had manifested His glory and knit to Himself in closer union the first band of disciples. This thought is present to the writer as the reason why He went there. It was the place “where He made the water wine.”

**And there was a certain nobleman.**—The margin shows the difference of opinion among our translators as to what English word gives the true idea of the position of the person who is in the text called “nobleman.” The Greek word is an adjective formed from the word for “king,” and as a substantive occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is frequent in Josephus, who uses it in our sense of courtier, or for a civil or military officer, but not for one of the royal family. The king, whose “king’s man” is here spoken of, was almost certainly Herod Antipas, who was left the kingdom in his father’s first will, and is called “king” by St.

at Capernaum. (47) When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judæa into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son : for he was at the point of death. (48) Then said Jesus unto him, Ex-

cept ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. (49) The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. (50) Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken un-

Matthew (xiv. 9) and by St. Mark (vi. 14). The person here named may therefore be a "royalist" or "Herodian" (comp. Matt. xxii. 16; Mark iii. 6); but in a domestic incident like this the reference would be to his social position, rather than to his political opinions. Perhaps "king's officer" represents the vagueness of the original better than any other English term. It is not improbable that the person was Chuza, and that his wife's presence in the band of women who followed Christ (Luke viii. 3) is to be traced to the restoration of her child. For the position of Capernaum, see chap. vi. 59, Note.

(47) **When he heard that Jesus was come . . .**—The distance of Capernaum from Cana was from twenty to twenty-five miles. The report of Christ's return to Galilee had spread, then, over this wide area.

(48) **Signs and wonders.**—See Note on chap. ii. 11. The words are here addressed to Jews, for there is no reason to think that the nobleman himself was not one. They are spoken to him, but the *ye* extends them to others standing near and to the class of persons whom he represents. It had been so with the Jews in Jerusalem (chap. ii. 18, 23), and it was so with the Jews in Galilee. (Comp. 1 Cor.

i. 22.) How different from this faith, which demanded a miracle, and therefore was not faith, but sight, was the acceptance by the Samaritans without a miracle, who believed for the woman's word, and more fully when they heard the word of Christ Himself.

**Ye will not believe.**—The negative is in its strongest form, *Ye will by no means believe.*

(49) **Ere my child die.**—But human sorrow is the birth-pang of faith. The sense of utter powerlessness leads the soul to cast itself on the Strong One for strength. The faith is still weak, but it is there. It does not realise that Christ can speak the word and heal the child, but it does feel that His presence could save him, and pleads as a father for his son. "Come down, ere my child die."

(50) **Go thy way.**—His faith is to be strengthened, and is to pass beyond a trust in aid through bodily presence. Jesus will not go down, but he is himself to go with the assurance, "Thy son liveth." Up to this point he had believed on the testimony of others, but he, too, now believes on account of the word of Christ Himself.

**Had spoken unto him.**—*Better, spake unto him.* The word he believed was that spoken then,

to him, and he went his way. <sup>(51)</sup> And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. <sup>(52)</sup> Then enquired he of

them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. <sup>(53)</sup> So the father knew that it was at

**(51) And as he was now going.**—Many a long mile lay between him and his child, and many an anxious thought must have come to his mind as he journeyed homeward. Now faith would be strong, and now almost give way; but he travels on with the words, “Thy son liveth,” which had come to him as a voice from heaven, sustaining and cheering him. Again he hears the same words, “Thy son liveth;” but they are spoken by the servants, who have come to meet him, and bring from Capernaum the glad news that he had himself heard at Cana.

**(52) Then enquired he of them.**—But these two facts—the assurance at Cana, and the actual healing powers at Capernaum—were they in truth related to each other? He remembers the hour at which one was spoken; he inquires the hour at which the other was realised. He does not even now grasp the full meaning of the words, and thinks of the gradual abatement of the fever, and the slow convalescence, and asks when the child “began to amend.” They have seen the sudden change as of a new power passing into the body on the point of death. They have spoken of this as a new life, and they now think of the fever as having completely left him.

**Yesterday at the seventh hour.**—We have seen (chap. i. 39) that there is no sufficient reason for thinking that St. John uses the

western method of counting the hours of the day. Still less is it likely that Galilean servants, who are here the speakers, should have done so. To believe, moreover, that it was seven o’clock in the morning or evening adds to, and does not remove, the difficulty of the length of time implied in “yesterday.” To say that the father remained some time with Jesus, and that “the believer doth not make haste,” is to pervert both the spirit and the words of the text. He clearly went at once (verse 50), and his anxiety naturally quickened his speed. The distance was not more than twenty-five English miles, and he had not travelled the whole of it, for the servants had gone to meet him. The supposed explanation cannot therefore be explained. But the words, if taken in their simple meaning, involve no such difficulty. These Jews, as all Jews, meant by the “seventh hour” the seventh from sunrise, what we should call one o’clock. After sunset the same evening they would have commenced a new day (comp. *Excursus G., The Day of the Crucifixion of the Lord*), and this seventh hour would be to them as one o’clock the day before, or the seventh hour yesterday. We have thus an interval of five or six hours between the words spoken by our Lord and their confirmation by the servants.

**(53) So the father knew.**—He

the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself be-

lieved, and his whole house.  
<sup>(54)</sup> This is again the second miracle that Jesus did,

was not mistaken, then. The power he had felt when these words were spoken to him was real. The hours that had passed since, as he hastened to know all, had prepared him to read the sign. "Thy son liveth!" "The seventh hour yesterday!" There is more than one miracle here. A new life passes into his own spirit, and he, too, bound in the death-grasp of a formal religion, liveth! A Father's love has yearned for him. Christ has come down ere the child died.

**Himself believed.**—This is a yet higher faith. He believed the report before he went to Cana. He believed personally when he pleaded, "Lord, come down." He believed the word that Jesus spake when told to go his way, and every step of that road going away from the power to the sufferer was an act of faith; but still there is place for a fuller faith, and he and his household became believers. St. John traces here, as before in the case of the Samaritans (verses 41, 42), and of the disciples themselves (chap. ii. 11), the successive development of faith.

**(54) This is again the second.**—The English version has inserted the article, which is not found in the Greek, and has added in italics *is* and *that*. Omitting these additions, and remembering that in St. John's language every miracle has its deeper teaching, the verse will read, "This again, a second sign, did Jesus when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee." His first presence in Galilee was marked by

a sign (chap. ii. 1—11); and this visit is also. There the individual disciples, who were to leave home and follow Him, read the lesson the sign was meant to teach. Now for the first time the family is the unit in the Christian life, and the father, himself taught to read the sign, becomes the first teacher, and representative, of the first Christian household.

This miracle of healing naturally brings to the thoughts the healing of the centurion's servant. (See Matt. viii. 5 *et seq.*, and Luke vii. 2 *et seq.*) To some minds, from Irenæus downwards, the resemblance has seemed so striking that nothing short of identification could explain it. But there is no *a priori* reason why two miracles should not be performed under circumstances in some respects analogous, and the knowledge of the healing in this case may well have led to the faith in that. If we bear in mind that the miracle is ever to be regarded as the parable in act, it is probable that the acts of Christ would be repeated. Repetition is a part of the method of every great teacher, and formed a large part in the Rabbinic systems. Jesus Christ was, it is true, infinitely above all human teachers, but His hearers were ordinary men, and His teaching and working must have adapted itself to the constitution of the human mind. A comparison of the present narratives will establish the following points of difference, which in their totality amount, it is believed, to

when he was come out of  
Judea into Galilee.

A.D. 58

CHAPTER V.—  
<sup>(1)</sup> After this there was a

little short of proof, that St. John has added the history of a sign which is not recorded in the earlier Gospels.

(1) It is here a nobleman who pleads for his son; there a centurion for his servant (Matt. viii. 6; Luke vii. 2).

(2) Here the pleading is in person; there the elders of the Jews intercede (Luke vii. 3).

(3) Here the nobleman is almost certainly a Jew; there the centurion is certainly a Gentile (Matt. viii. 10 *et seq.*; Luke vii. 9).

(4) Here the words of miracle are spoken at Cana; there at Caper-nau (Matt. viii. 5; Luke vii. 1).

(5) Here the illness is a fever; there paralysis (Matt. viii. 6).

(6) Here the father pleads that Jesus will go down with him; there the centurion deprecates His going, and asks Him to command with a word only (Matt. viii. 7; Luke vii. 7).

(7) Here the Lord speaks the word only, and does not go down; there apparently He does both (Matt. viii. 13; Luke vii. 6).

(8) Here the Lord blames the half-faith which demands signs and wonders; there He marvels at the fulness of faith, and, it may be in reference to this very nobleman, says, "In no one have I found so great faith in Israel" (Matt. viii. 10).

## V.

[3. The fuller Revelation,  
and Growth of Un-  
belief among the Jews  
(chaps. v. 1—xii. 50).]

(1) JESUS IS LIFE (chaps. v. 1—vi. 71).

(a) This follows from the unity of Son and Father (chap. v.).

(a) Energy is given to strengthen the weak (verses 1—9).

(8) Persecution by the Jews (verses 10—18).

(7) Teaching of Jesus (verses 19—47):

The Father's work also the Son's (verses 19 and 20);

The spiritual resurrection and judgment (verses 21—27);

The physical resurrection and judgment (verses 28—30);

Witness, and the reason of its rejection (verses 31—47).]

(1) A feast of the Jews.—The writer does not tell us what feast this was, and we must be content to remain without certain knowledge. There is, perhaps, no Jewish feast with which it has not been identified, and it has been even proclaimed confidently that it must have been the Day of Atonement! (Caspari, *Chron. and Geogr. Introd.*, Eng. Trans., p. 130). Our reading is to be regarded as the better one, though not a few authorities insert the article, and interpret "the Feast" to mean the Feast of Passover.

The time-limits are chap. iv. 35, which was in Tebeth (January), and chap. vi. 4, which brings us to the next Passover in Nisan (April), i.e., an interval of four months, the

feast of the Jews;<sup>a</sup> and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>(2)</sup> Now there is at

<sup>a</sup> Lev. 23.  
2; Deut.  
16. 1.  
1 Or, gate.

Jerusalem by the sheep market<sup>1</sup> a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Beth-

year being an intercalary one with the month VeAdar (and Adar) added, or, as we should say, with two months of March. The only feast which falls in this interval is the Feast of Purim, and it is with this that the best modern opinion identifies the feast of our text. It was kept on the 14th of Adar (March), in commemoration of the deliverance of the Jews from the plots of Haman, and took its name from the lots cast by him (Esth. iii. 7; ix. 24 *et seq.*). It was one of the most popular feasts (Jos. *Ant.* xi. 6, § 13), and was characterised by festive rejoicings, presents, and gifts to the poor. At the same time it was not one of the great feasts, and while the writer names the Passover (chaps. ii. 13; vi. 4; xiii. 1), the Feast of Tabernacles (chap. vii. 2), and even that of the Dedication (chap. x. 22), this has no further importance in the narrative than to account for the fact of Jesus being again in Jerusalem.

<sup>(2)</sup> Now there is at Jerusalem.—We have no certain knowledge of the time referred to in the last, nor of the place referred to in this, verse. For "sheep-market," we should read with the margin, *sheep-gate* (Neh. iii. 1, 32; xii. 39). This gate was known well enough to fix the locality of the pool, but is itself now unknown. St. Stephen's Gate, which has been the traditional identification, did not exist until the time of Agrippa. There is something tempting in the interpretation of the Vulgate

adopted by some modern travellers and commentators, which supplies the substantive from the immediate context, and reads "sheep-pool." But the fact that the Greek adjective for "sheep" is used here only in the New Testament, and in the Old Testament only in the passages of Nehemiah referred to above, seems to fix the meaning beyond doubt.

Bethesda means "house of mercy." The "Hebrew tongue" is the then current Hebrew, what we ordinarily call Aramaic, or Syro-Chaldaic. The spot is pointed out traditionally as *Birket Israil*, near the fort of Antonia, but since Dr. Robinson's rejection of this, it has been generally abandoned. He himself adopted the "Fountain of the Virgin," which is intermittent. He saw the water rise to the height of a foot in five minutes, and was told that this occurs sometimes two or three times a day. The fountain is connected with the pool of Siloam, and probably with the fountain under the Grand Mosque. The seventh edition of Alford's *Commentary* contains an interesting letter, pointing out that Siloam itself was probably the pool of Bethesda, and that the remains of four columns in the east wall of the pool, with four others in the centre, show that there was a structure half covering it, which resting upon four columns would give five spaces or porches. The fact that this pool is called Siloam in chap. ix. 7 does not oppose this view. The word "called" here, is more exactly

esda, having five porches.  
<sup>(3)</sup> In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. <sup>(4)</sup> For an angel

went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole

*surnamed*, and “House of Mercy” may well have been given to the structure, and thus extended to the pool in addition to its own name. But to pass from the uncertain, it is established beyond doubt, (1) that there are, and then were, on the east of Jerusalem mineral springs; (2) that these are, and then were, intermittent; and (3) that such springs are resorted to in the East just as they are in Europe.

**(3) In these lay a great multitude.**—The word “great” before multitude, and the latter clause of the verse “waiting for the moving of the water,” and the whole of verse 4, is omitted by most of the oldest MSS. including the Sinaitic and the Vatican, and is judged to be no part of the original text by a consensus of modern editors, including Tischendorf, Tregelles, Alford, and Westcott and Hort. It is interesting to note how a gloss like this has found its way into the narrative, and, by ninety-nine out of every hundred readers, is now regarded as an integral part of St. John’s Gospel. We meet with it very early. It is found in the Alexandrian MS., and in the Latin and early Syriac versions. Tertullian refers to it. This points to a wide acceptance from the second century downwards, and points doubtless to the popular interpretation of that day.

It explains the man’s own view in verse 7, and the fact of the multitude assembled round the pool (verse 3). The bubbling water moving as it were with life, and in its healing power seeming to convey new energy to blind and halt and lame, was to them as the presence of a living messenger of God. They knew not its constituent elements, and could not trace the law of its action, but they knew the Source of all good, who gave intellect to man and healing influence to matter, effect to the remedy and skill to the physician; and they accepted the gift as direct from Him. Scientists of the present century will smile at these Christians of the second century. The Biblical critic is glad that he can remove these words from the record, and cannot be called upon to explain them. But it may be fairly asked, which is most truly scientific—to grasp the Ultimate Cause of all, even without the knowledge of intermediate links; or to trace these links, and express them in so-called laws, and make these abstract laws lifeless representatives of the living God? There is a *via media* which, here as elsewhere, wisdom will seek rather than either extreme. All true theology must be, in the best sense, scientific; and all true science must be, in the best sense, religious.

of whatsoever disease he had. <sup>(5)</sup> And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. <sup>(6)</sup> When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that case*, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made

whole? <sup>(7)</sup> The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. <sup>(8)</sup> Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and

<sup>(5)</sup> **Thirty and eight years.**—The period expresses, not his age on the one hand, nor the time of his being at Bethesda on the other, but the time during which he had suffered from the infirmity. Helpless and friendless, having spent half the lot of human life in that condition, he appeals without an uttered word to the Mercy which is present in the House of Mercy; and to him alone of those He healed, does Christ of His own accord address the first question. The infirmity was in some way connected with youthful sin (verse 14), and the sufferer and his history would be well known to those at Jerusalem. The exact knowledge of the writer tells us that for thirty-eight years he had paid sin's penalty.

<sup>(6)</sup> And now Jesus sees him lying there among the throng of sufferers, and every ache of every limb, and every sorrow of every heart, told of the perfection of life marred by the curse of sin; but this man's own sin had left its mark upon him, which men may read and condemn, though within the whitened fairness of their own outer deeds, the soul's life was by sin palsied to its very core. But he hears, in tones that went to the heart as he listened to them, the strange question, stranger indeed than "Wilt thou . . . ."

"Wildest thou to be made whole?"

<sup>(7)</sup> What does the question mean? Will this Stranger, whom he has never seen before, do for him what none of those who often saw him had ever done? Will he watch for the bubbling water, and place him first in it? Is there one being in all the world who regards his state as calling for loving pity, rather than scornful loathing?

**I have no man.**—There is an eloquence of helplessness more powerful than that of words. Day by day he has watched, listened for the first sound, caught the first movement in the bath, summoned the feeble vestiges of strength to an action on which all depended, and hoping each succeeding time, in spite of despair in which last time's hope has been engulfed, has been coming, when "another goeth down before." "I have no man" is to-day the helpless, unspoken cry of thousands imaged here.

<sup>(8)</sup> **Jesus saith unto him.**—There is no formal demand, or formal statement of faith as preceding the healing. (Comp., e.g., Matt. xiii. 58; Mark ix. 24.) Men have often wondered at this. If faith is an expression in words or anything outside man, then there is room for wonder; but if it be a

walk. <sup>(9)</sup> And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

<sup>(10)</sup> The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath

<sup>a</sup> Jer. 17.  
22.

day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>(11)</sup> He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

<sup>(12)</sup> Then asked they him, What man is that which

living principle, the “seeing Him who is invisible” (Heb. xi. 27), then surely we may seek in vain for a more striking instance of its power than in this man; who in all, and through all, and in spite of all, trusted in, and looked for, the mercy of God, and had faith to be healed.

Jesus sees in him this receptive power, which in his very helplessness is strength, and calls it forth. He who could barely move is told to rise! he who had for eight-and-thirty years lain on his bed is to carry that bed and walk!

**(9) The man was made whole.**—The sufferer was known; the healing is in the striking form that none could gainsay.

**(10) The Jews therefore said unto him.**—But what they cannot deny, they can cavil at. One might have expected from human hearts, wonder and thankfulness that the man could walk at all. We find from the formalism which had bound the letter round men until it had well nigh crushed all heart out of them, the murmur that the carrying of his bed was not lawful on the Sabbath. This is not the only place in this Gospel where the words and works of Christ clashed with the current views of the sanctity of the Sabbath day. (Comp. chaps. vii. 24; ix. 14;

and see Matt. xii. 1—13). Here it will be sufficient to note that the bearing of burdens was specially forbidden in the Prophecy of Jeremiah: “Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day” (xvii. 21; comp. Neh. xiii. 15 *et seq.*), and that the Rabbis pressed this to include a burden of any kind. They said, for example, “If any man on the Sabbath bring in or take out anything on the Sabbath from a public to a private place, if thoughtlessly he hath done this he shall sacrifice for his sin; but if wilfully, he shall be cut off and shall be stoned.”

**(11) He that made me whole.**—The man bases the use of his power upon the will of Him who had given it. That has been the one divine voice he has heard, and it cannot be wrong for him to obey it.

**(12) What man is that which said unto thee . . . ?**—They pass over the giving of the power, and quote only the command which comes under their technical prohibition. The life and strength of once-palsied limb is as nothing; the fact that this man was breaking their tradition is secondary. The real motive is a charge against Him whose power the body of the Jewish people was feeling as a life-current, quickening deadened

said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? <sup>(13)</sup> And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a

<sup>1</sup> Or, from  
the mul-  
titude  
that  
was.

multitude being<sup>1</sup> in that place. <sup>(14)</sup> Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and saith unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin

energies, and rousing men to a sense of God's presence in their midst. Aye, and these Jews of Judaism feel the thrill of this current all around them, though their will tries to isolate them by the coldness of unbelief from a power which they have not directed, and which they refuse to be directed by. Men and women who have been all their lives lying in moral helplessness, waiting and looking for God, yet never helped by God's priests and rulers, are now standing and moving in the strength that their new Teacher gives. They cannot deny it, but can they prevent it? This spirit is life, but there is still the letter which killeth. It cuts them to the heart to see His power in their midst, but there is the body of Rabbinic precept and oral law. He has now crossed that. They will apply it to stamp out His work and kill Him.

**Take up thy bed, and walk.**—Omit "thy bed," with the best MSS. It is inserted from the previous verse. Their passionate question expresses itself in the fewest words.

<sup>(13)</sup> **For Jesus had conveyed himself away.**—The second clause of this verse, as is shown by the marginal rendering, was not intended by our translators to convey the impression that a crowd had assembled round the scene of the miracle, and that to avoid this Jesus passed away from the place. In that case the man

must have known who He was. Still the English does probably convey this meaning to most readers, and it would be better to give a freer rendering—*For Jesus disappeared among the multitude which was in the place.* The presence of the multitude is not given as the reason for His going away, but as explaining the fact that He passed on with them after having spoken to the man, and was thus unknown to him.

<sup>(14)</sup> **Afterward.**—There is no mark of time. Probably it was on the same day. Perhaps the first use of his restored power was to go to the Temple and pay his thank-offering to God.

**Sin no more.**—These words connect his past sufferings with individual sin. He has been freed from the effects, but if they have been truly remedial he has been freed from the cause too. He is in God's house. Let him accept restored powers as God's gift, and let their devotion be the true thank-offering. The imperative is present, and points to a permanent condition of life—"Be not any more a sinner."

**A worse thing.**—There is, then, something worse than a life of unmoving helplessness. There is a sadness of tone even as He says, "Behold, thou art made whole;" just as there is a sigh when He says, "Ephphatha: Be opened!" (Mark vii. 34). There are men for whom it had been

no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. <sup>(15)</sup> The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. <sup>(16)</sup> And therefore did the

Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

<sup>(17)</sup> But Jesus answered them, My Father work-

good never to have been born (Matt. xxvi. 24). There are limbs that had better never have moved. There are lives that had better have sunk in the negative inaction of death, than have cursed themselves and others in positive deed and speech and thought of life. The power of existence is of infinite grandeur, but it is also of infinite responsibility. It has within its reach the highest good for self and for mankind; but if the God-given power is sacrificed to sin, there is within its reach an utterable depth of woe.

<sup>(15)</sup> The man departed, and told the Jews.—We are not told what reason underlay his report to the Jews. It is natural that he should give the answer which he could not give before (verse 13), and that he should wish to secure himself from the charge of Sabbath-breaking by supplying his authority. The narrative does not suggest that he did this in a tone of defiance, which has been found here from remembrance of chap. ix., still less that he used his new strength immediately to bring a charge against the Giver of it. The impression is rather, that he felt that this power came from a prophet sent by God; and that he told this to those who were God's representatives to the nation, supposing that they would recognise Him too.

<sup>(16)</sup> The words "and sought to

slay Him" should be omitted. They have been inserted in some MSS. to explain the first clause of verse 18. For "He had done," read *He was doing*. The word is in the imperfect tense, expressing continuance or custom. It is either that from this one instance they generalise a law of practice to justify their persecution, or that some of the earlier unrecorded miracles were also performed on the Sabbath. (Comp. Luke vi. 1—11.)

<sup>(17)</sup> My Father worketh hitherto (or, *up to this moment*).

—They charge Him with breaking the law of God. His answer to this charge is that His action was the result of His Sonship and unity with that God. The very idea of God implied action. This was familiar to the thought of the day. Comp., e.g., in the contemporary Philo, "God never ceases working; but as to burn is the property of fire, and to be cold is the property of snow, thus also to work is the property of God, and much the more, inasmuch as He is the origin of action for all others" (*Legis Allegor.* i. 3). See the whole section. The English reader will find it in Bohn's Ed., vol. i., p. 53). The rest on the seventh day was the completion of the works of creation (see this stated emphatically in Gen. ii. 2, 3). It was not—it could not be—a cessation in divine work or in the flow of divine energy. That knew nor day nor

eth hitherto, and I work.

(18) Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

(19) Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

night, nor summer nor winter, nor Sabbath' nor Jubilee. For man, and animal, and tree, and field, this alternation of a time of production and a time of reception was needed; but God was the ever-constant source of energy and life for all in heaven and earth and sea. The power going forth to heal that sufferer was the same power which sustained them in well-being. The strength which passed through his half-dead frame, and bade it live, was the same which every Sabbath morning awoke them from death's image, sleep, and would awake from death itself (verse 21). The sun shone, and fruitful showers fell, and flower burst its bud, and harvest ripened, and they themselves, in energy of life, had grown on every day alike. God ever worketh up to this present moment. That God is also Father. The Son, therefore, worketh in the same way. This poor sufferer, lying helpless, is of the same human nature with the Son of God. He has in faith and hope made himself receptive of the divine energy, and that energy which can know no Sabbath, but is ever going forth to every heart that can receive it, hath made him whole.

(18) For "had broken," read *did He break*, and for "His Father," *His own Father*. They recognise

as beyond doubt what He means by the term "My Father," and the attribute of ceaseless energy. It was a claim which none other had ever made, that God was in a peculiar sense His own Father. They feel it is a claim to divinity, a "making Himself equal with God."

**The more to kill him.**—This implies what is included in the persecution of verse 16. (Comp. Matt. xii. 14; Mark iii. 6; Luke vi. 7—11.)

(19) **The Son can do nothing of himself.**—The key to this and the following verses, is in the relation of Father and Son, from which they start. The Jews saw in this equality with God blasphemy, and sought to kill Him. Men have since seen and now see in it inferiority, and a proof that Christ did not claim for Himself the glory which the Apostle claims for Him in the prologue (chap. i. 1—18); and which the Church has ever in reverent adoration placed as a crown upon His brow. The words "Son," "Father," are the answer to both. Did they accuse Him of blasphemy? He is a Son. The very essence of blasphemy was independence of, and rivalry with, God. He claimed no such position, but was as a Son subject to His Father's will, was as a Son morally

(20) For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

unable to do anything of Himself, and did whatever He saw the Father do. Yea, more. He thought not His equality with God a thing to be seized, but emptied Himself and became, as they then saw Him, in the form of a servant, and in the likeness of men. (Comp. Phil. ii. 6 *et seq.*)

(20) **For the Father loveth the Son.**—Do men deny His divinity? God is His Father. There is, therefore, oneness of essence. The unity of His work with God's work has for its basis the Eternal Love, which sheweth to the Son all that the Father doeth. As the relation of Son implies moral inability to do anything apart from the Father, so the relation of Father implies moral necessity to impart all to the Son.

**Greater works than these.**—The works which he had done could only be explained by the unity of His work with that of the Father; but in the development of His own human nature and His mediatorial work, there will be shown to Him, and He will show to man by doing them in their midst, works of which these are but as the first signs. The "ye" is emphatic, and the word "marvel" should also be noticed. "Ye who seek to kill Me shall yourselves see works which, against your will, shall be wonders to you; but against your will they cannot be signs. Ye will marvel, but ye will not believe!"

(21) For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. (22) For the Father judgeth no man, but hath

(21) The following verses (21—29) show what these greater works are. They are the Resurrection and the Judgment; but these are regarded as spiritual as well as physical, as present as well as future. Once again the background of the thought is to be found in verse 17. Resurrection and Judgment were the work of the Father—"My Father worketh hitherto;"—but the manifestation in limits of space and time is the work of the Son—"and I work."

**For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them.**—The "them" after "quickeneth" is better omitted. The words are purposely general. Raising the dead and making alive are attributes of God. "He kills and He makes alive" (Deut. xxxii. 39). "He bringeth down to the underworld and bringeth up" (1 Sam. ii. 6; Tobit xiii. 2). "He has the power of life and death" (Wisd. xvi. 13). These the Son seeth the Father doing, and these also he doeth in like manner. He, too, has the power to quicken whom He will, and He useth that power. Deadened souls have felt it, and are living in the new-born life. There is in His word, for the man who hears it and believes it, a moral change which is nothing other than an actual passing out of death into life (verse 24).

(22) **For the Father judgeth**

committed all judgment unto the Son: <sup>(23)</sup> that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. <sup>(24)</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that

heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. <sup>(25)</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the

**no man.**—Better, *For not even doth the Father judge any man*; and if not the Father, to whom judgment belongs, then none other but the Son, to whom He hath committed all judgment. To judge (comp. verse 29) is the opposite of to quicken, in the previous verse. The fact that the Son hath power to judge, is correlative with His power to quicken whom He will. The spiritual life given to, and received by, some (verse 24), is a separation from, and a judgment of, others. The eternal life which shall be given to some, shall be the eternal separation from, and exclusion of, others. The reason why judgment is committed to the Son is given in verse 27 as resulting from His humanity. It is stated here as resulting from His divinity. It is that this power, like the quickening power of verse 21, should lead all to give to the Son honour equal to that which they render to the Father. Again, this relation is urged against those who profess to honour God, and as a proof of it were seeking to kill His Son. That Sonship, expressing at once subordination and unity, necessarily involved the Fatherhood. To reject Him was to reject the Father who sent Him. (Comp. verses 24, 30, 36, 37.)

<sup>(24)</sup> **Verily, verily, I say unto you.**—(Comp. verses 19 and 25, and Note on chap. i. 51.) For “shall not come into condemnation,” read *doth not come into judgment*. (Comp. Note on chap. iii. 18.)

The repeated “verily” introduces, as elsewhere, one of the deeper spiritual truths which He came to teach. This truth explains the “whom He willeth” of verse 21 to have no limit but that of human receptivity. It again brings out the unity of Father and Son. The Son’s word is a revelation of the Father. He that hears this word believes not on Him only, but on Him that sent Him (comp. chap. xii. 44). It asserts that eternal life is not of the future only, but is already in germ possessed by the man who is thus brought into communion with the source of life. (Comp. 1 John i. 2.) This man comes not into judgment. There can be for him no separation from God, no condemnation. He has already passed from the state of death to that of life. What remains for him is the development of life.

**Believeth on him that sent me.**—Better, *believeth Him that sent Me*.

<sup>(25)</sup> **The hour is coming.**—

dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God : and they that hear shall live.  
<sup>(26)</sup> For as the Father hath life in himself ; so hath he

given to the Son to have life in himself ; <sup>(27)</sup> and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

The same solemn words repeat in another form the same great truth. The reference here, as in the whole of this paragraph (verses 21—27), is to the spiritually dead. This is shown by the “now is,” which cannot be applied to the physical resurrection (comp. verse 28), and cannot be explained by the instances of physical restoration to life during the earthly ministry of our Lord ; and also by the last clause, where “live” must mean the higher spiritual life, as it does in the whole context. It is shown too by the parallelism of the clauses with those of the previous verse :—

“He that heareth” . . . “the dead shall hear”  
“My word” . . . “the voice of the Son of God,”  
“Hath eternal life” . . . “they that hear shall live.”

The world is as a vast moral graveyard where men lie dead in sin-sense-bound hand and foot, with spirits buried in bodies which should be holy temples, but have become as unclean tombs ; but the voice of the Son of God speaks, and spirit, love, life, passes through the chambers of death, quickening souls whose death is as yet but a sleep, and those who hear and obey come forth into new life.

<sup>(26)</sup> **Hath he given to the Son.**—Better, *gave He to the Son also.*

**Life in himself.**—The Son has spoken of the dead hearing His voice and living, but this giving

of life to others can only be by one who has in himself an original source of life. This the Father has, and this the Son also has. To the Son in His pre-existent state it was natural, as being equal with the Father. To the Son who had emptied Himself of the exercise of the attributes which constituted the glory of that state (comp. again Phil. ii. 6, *et seq.*), it was part of the Father’s gift by which He exalted Him exceedingly, and gave Him the name which is above every name. It was, then, a gift in time to One who had possessed it before all time, and for the purposes of the mediatorial work had relinquished it. It was a gift, not to the Eternal Son, but to the Incarnate Word.

<sup>(27)</sup> **Hath given.**—As above *gave*. The “also” after judgment should be omitted. In these verses, as before, the two relations of Father—Son, Life—Judgment, are emphatic. Both Life and Judgment can belong to God only, but both are the Father’s gift to the Son.

**The Son of man.**—Render, *a son of man*. The term differs by the striking omission of articles from the usual term for the Messiah, and occurs again in Rev. i. 13; xiv. 14. It is here in contrast to the “Son of God” in verse 25. The explanation is, once more, to be found in the thought of the Incarnation as an emptying Himself of the attributes which are the glories of the divine nature. It is

(28) Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, (29) and shall come forth; they that have done good,<sup>a</sup> unto the resurrection

<sup>a</sup> Matt.  
25. 46.

of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (30) I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine

not because He is Messiah (*the Son of Man*), but human (*a son of man*), that the Father gave Him the power to have life in Himself, and the authority to execute judgment. (See Note on verse 26.) Still His humanity is not *here* dwelt upon as a qualification for the office of judge, because it is of the same nature as that of those He judges. This thought and the thoughts which flow from it (comp. Acts xviii. 31) are full of beauty and truth, but the side of truth prominent in this verse, and all those which follow verse 17, is not His relation to man, but his relation to God. All are a sermon on the text, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

(28) **Marvel not at this**—*i.e.*, that He has Himself a source of life and authority to judge. There shall follow from this "greater works," at which they shall marvel. There is an hour coming (here not with the addition "and now is," verse 25) when the victory over physical death shall also make manifest this life, for "all that are in the graves" shall hear His voice, and the final judgment shall declare to the universe His authority to judge.

(29) **Damnation.**—Better, *judgment*. See Note on chap. iii. 20. On "done good" and "done (*practised*) evil," see Notes on chap. iii. 20, 21. It is remarkable that these

are the only instances where the words here and there used for "practise" and for "evil" occur in St. John. This double opposition, and the use of words which He does not use again, support the distinction in the earlier Note. The passages are comments on each other. The law of the spiritual resurrection now, is the law of that which shall be hereafter. Those who, working out the truth, come to the light now, that their deeds may be manifested, because they are wrought in God, shall in the final testing, when the secrets of every heart shall be revealed, rise unto the resurrection of life, to dwell in eternal light. Those who, practising evil, choose the darkness now, shall in that final testing, when whatsoever has been spoken in the darkness shall be heard in the light, rise unto the resurrection of condemnation (Acts xxiv. 15), bound in chains of darkness, and be cast into outer darkness. (Comp. Matt. viii. 12 and xxv. 46 and 1 Cor. iii. 13 *et seq.*)

(30) For "the will of the Father which hath sent Me," in the last clause, read, with nearly all the best MSS., *the will of Him that sent Me*. (Comp. verses 36 and 37.)

The verse is the expression, once again, but now with special reference to judgment, of the thought with which the discourse opened,

own will, but the will of  
the Father which hath sent  
me. (31) If I bear witness  
of myself,<sup>a</sup> my witness is  
not true. (32) There is

<sup>b</sup> Matt. 3.  
17.

<sup>a</sup> See ch.  
8. 14.

another that beareth wit-  
ness of me;<sup>b</sup> and I know  
that the witness which he  
witnesseth of me is true.  
(33) Ye sent unto John, and

and which runs as a current through  
the whole. (Comp. Notes on verses  
19 and 22.) As in all His works  
(verse 19), so in the greater works  
of life-giving (verse 26) and of judg-  
ment, the Son cannot act apart from  
the Father. The judgment must be  
just, because it is not one of an  
isolated will, but one in accord with  
the eternal will of God. He seeth  
the Father's works (verse 19), and  
in like manner doeth them; He  
heareth the Father's will, and that  
alone He seeketh.

The tenses in this verse are pre-  
sent, and the judgment is therefore  
to be interpreted without limitation  
of time. It is one which He is ever-  
more passing on every act and word  
and thought. (Comp. chap. ix. 39.)

(31) **If I bear witness of myself.**—This verse is the link be-  
tween the thoughts of Christ's  
person (verses 17—30) and the  
witness to Him (verses 32—40).  
He can do nothing of Himself  
(verse 30), and does not even bear  
witness of Himself. If He did, it  
would be on technical grounds not  
valid testimony. He meets the  
objection then doubtless in their  
minds, and soon expressed in their  
words. (Comp. Notes on chap. viii.  
13—18.)

(32) **There is another . . .**—  
*i.e.*, the Father. The reference to  
the Baptist is excluded by the words  
which follow. The difficulty which  
has been seen in this indirect refer-  
ence to the Father, is removed if we  
connect the words closely with those

preceding them. The point is in  
the fact that another, different in  
personality from Himself, bore  
witness of Him. (Comp. chap. viii.  
50; Matt. x. 28, *et al.*)

**I know . . .**—This has seemed  
to have a natural meaning if it is  
the authority given to John's wit-  
ness, but to be less fitting if applied  
to the Father's. In two of the  
oldest MSS., and some of the ear-  
liest versions, we read “ye know,”  
and this has been adopted by some  
modern editors; but the origin of  
this reading is obvious, and there  
is no sufficient reason for departing  
from the common text. Its mean-  
ing is quite in harmony with the  
relation of the Son to the Father,  
which has been dwelt upon. The  
Father beareth witness, is bearing  
witness (comp. verse 37), in the  
unity of work which Son and Father  
alike work (verses 17, 19, 20, 30);  
and the Son knows that His power  
to do this work can come from no  
other source. His own nature re-  
sponds to the Father's voice; He  
knows it to be true. (Comp. chap.  
iii. 33.)

(33) **Ye sent . . .**—Both verbs  
are perfects. Better, therefore, *Ye  
have sent*; *He hath borne witness*.  
The pronoun “ye” is emphatically  
opposed to the “I” of the following  
verse. They sought human witness.  
He had witness which was divine.  
The object of John's mission was  
to bear witness of the Light (chap. i.  
7), and this he did to them (chap. i.  
19 *et seq.*).

he bare witness unto the truth.<sup>(34)</sup> But I receive not testimony from man:

<sup>a en. 1.7</sup>

but these things I say, that ye might be saved. <sup>(35)</sup> He was a burning and a shining

<sup>(34)</sup> **But I receive not testimony . . .**—There is no reason for changing the word. The substantive, and verbs from verse 31, have been rendered by “witness,” and it is better to keep it here. The English also fails to give the article, and is therefore misleading. He did receive witness from men—had received witness from John—but this was not *the witness* upon which all was based. Its purpose was to lead them to Christ Himself, and He now refers to it, to show them its true position, that that purpose might be fulfilled.

**But these things I say, that ye might be saved.**—The emphasis of the clause should be placed upon the pronoun “ye.” The thought is that our Lord does not refer to John’s witness for His own sake, but in order that they might be saved. He had a greater witness than that of John, but this they were not yet prepared to receive. They had received John for a season, and had rejoiced in his light. He refers to him now that that light may lead them to the true Source of Light. Some of those who had sent to the Baptist may now understand his words in a deeper sense than any which had come to them before, and may find in them words leading to salvation.

<sup>(35)</sup> **He was a burning and a shining light.**—Better, *He was the lamp that is lighted and (then) giveth light.* The statement of the Prologue, “He was not the Light, but came to bear witness of the Light” (chap. i. 8), shows how im-

portant this change is. The word rendered “light” occurs again in Matt. v. 15; vi. 22; Mark iv. 21; Luke viii. 16; xi. 33, 34, 36; xii. 35; xv. 8; 2 Pet. i. 19; Rev. xviii. 23; xxi. 23; xxii. 5. The reader who will take the trouble to compare these passages will see clearly the difference in the Greek words. It should be *lamp* in all these instances. The article in “*the lamp*” is to be explained from a reference to the one lamp of every home. (Comp. Matt. v. 15 and Mark iv. 21.) The term was in common use to denote a distinguished hero or teacher. The Rabbis were often called “Lamps of the Law,” and David was the “Lamp of Israel” (2 Sam. xxi. 17). Comp. the remarkable parallel spoken of the Baptist’s great prototype, “Then stood up Elias the prophet, as fire, and his word was kindled like a lamp” (Eccl. xlviii. 1). Others explain the words here of the promised lamp which was to appear, or of the torchbearer who lights the bridegroom’s path.

**Ye were willing . . .**—John’s work came to them as light in darkness. It attracted them; they went to it; they were willing to find a source of joy in it. They sent to ask him questions, but they heeded not his answers. But the light came to them not to amuse them, but to lead them. He gave light because he had been kindled at the Source of all Light. He came to bear witness to them of the true Light, from which his was derived. (Comp.

light : and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

(36) But I have greater witness than *that* of John : for the works which the Father hath given me to

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 3.  
17. and  
17. 5.

finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. (37) And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me.<sup>a</sup> Ye have neither

Note on chap. i. 23.) Their action with regard to John was part of the negatively evil, unreal character condemned in chap. iii. 20. They professed to be men, and teachers of other men ; but when speaking of this John, our Lord found a similitude of their generation in the changing moods of little children, playing in the market-place (Matt. xi. 16).

(36) For "hath given Me" read, with the better MSS., *gave Me*. The pronouns in "But I have" and in "that I do," are emphatic.

In this verse He returns to the thought of verse 32. The parenthesis in verses 33—35 shows that John was not the other there spoken of; and this verse shows that the special form of witness which He referred to was that of the works, which works He was then doing, and the voice of which they ought to have heard.

These "works" are not confined to what we speak of as miracles, but include the several parts of His Messianic work, which it was His food to finish (chap. iv. 34), and which He speaks of as finished (chap. xvii. 4; see Note there). There is a special reference here to the power to quicken and authority to judge, in verses 21, 22.

(37) **Hath borne witness of me.**—The marginal reference interprets this testimony of the

Father by the voices from heaven spoken at the Baptism and on the Mount of Transfiguration. Both are indeed illustrations, and are naturally suggested by the imagery of voice and shape in the latter half of the verse ; but one was at this moment in the future, and the other was a definite event which would have required a more definite reference. The Greek, indeed, distinguishes between the Incarnation at a definite point in time and the witness which was continued—*And the Father Himself which sent Me* (not "hath sent Me") *hath borne witness of Me*.

"His voice" and "His shape" are both general, and the "at any time" extends over the whole duration of previous revelation. Literally the clause is, *Voice of Him ye have not at any time heard, nor shape of Him have ye seen*. The reference to the revelation of the Old Testament Scriptures is, moreover, demanded by the immediate context, while the voice at the Baptism and the Transfiguration are not only absent from the present circle of thoughts, but also from St. John's Gospel. Jesus is answering a charge of breaking God's law, and of making Himself equal with God because He has claimed God's fatherhood in word for Himself, and has manifested it in life-power for man. That charge

heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.<sup>a</sup>

(38) And ye have not his word abiding in you: for

<sup>a</sup> Deut. 4. 12.

whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

(39) Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye

was but an example of their unreceptive spirit. Through the whole history of the nation, He had been revealing Himself to them. Through the chief knowledge-giving senses, eye and ear, they should have learnt in that past history to see God in the act of mercy, to hear Him in the word of love. They jealous for God's honour! It was then as it had been ever; voice of God they could not hear; vision of God they could not see.

(38) **Abiding in you.**—This striking thought of the word taking up its abode in the mind, and forming the mind in which it dwells, meets us only in St. John. (Comp. chap. xv. 7; 1 John ii. 14, 24; iii. 9, 17; and Note on chap. vi. 36.) They had, indeed, the word of God, but they had it not as a power ever living in them. They locked it up with sacred care in ark and synagogue; but it found no home in their inmost life, and had no real power on their practice. They could take it up and put it down. It was something outside themselves. Had it been in them, it would have produced in them a moral consciousness, which would have accepted, as of the same nature with itself, every fuller revelation from God. Their own spirits, moulded by the word of God dwelling in them, would have received the Word of God now among them. (Comp. *Excursus A: Doctrine of the Word.*) The fact that they believed not Him whom God sent

(not "hath sent") was itself the proof that they had not the abiding word.

(39) **Search the Scriptures.**—Better, *Ye search the Scriptures.* The question whether the mood is Imperative or Indicative, whether we have here a commandment to examine the writings of the Old Testament canon, or a reference to their habit of doing so, is one which has been discussed through the whole history of New Testament exposition, and one on which the opinion of those best qualified to judge has been, and is, almost equally divided. It is not a question of the form of the Greek word, for it may certainly be either. The English reader, therefore, is in a position to form his own opinion, and is in possession of almost all the evidence. He should observe that all the parallel verbs in the context are in the Indicative—"Ye have neither heard" . . . "nor have seen" (verse 37); "Ye have not His Word . . . ye believe not" (verse 38); "Ye think that . . . ye have" (verse 39); "Ye will not . . . ye might have" (verse 40). Why should there be a sudden change of construction in this instance only?

We find, then, this order of thought. (1) God has in the Old Testament witnessed of Me, but ye, with unreceptive hearts, have never heard a voice nor seen a shape of God (verse 37). (2) Ye have not His word dwelling in you, or it would have witnessed of Me (verse

have eternal life: and they |

| are they which testify of

38). (3) Instead of receiving the Scriptures as a living power within you, ye search and explain the letter of them from without (verse 39). (4) Ye think they contain eternal life, and hence your reverence for them (verse 39). (5) They really are witnesses of Me, and yet you, seeking in them eternal life, are not willing to come to Me that ye may have this life.

It is believed that this is the most natural interpretation of the words, and that it gives a fuller meaning than any other to the teaching of Christ.

The only objection to it of weight is that the Greek word for "search" (*ἐρευνᾶτε*) is one which would not have implied blame. It means to search after, track, inquire after (comp. chap. vii. 52); but, surely, this is just the expression for the literal spirit in which the Rabbis treated their Scriptures. Moreover, it is not the searching which is matter for blame, but the fact of the searching and not finding, which is matter for wonder.

Here, too, as elsewhere, the argument from the meaning of a Greek word must be pressed only within strict limits when we remember that it represents in translation a then current Hebrew word. The Hebrew language had a word which just at that time was frequent on every Rabbi's lips, and which exactly corresponds to it. As early as the Book of Chronicles we find mention of the *Midrashim*, or *Commentaries* in the sense in which this word is used, e.g., in "Caesar's *Commentaries*." The rest of the Acts of Abijah are "written in the Midrash of the prophet Iddo" (2 Chron.

xiii. 22). More than we now know of the history of Joash is "written in the Midrash of the Book of Kings" (2 Chron. xxiv. 27). In both cases our Authorised version renders the word by "story;" but this was at a time when its connection with "history" as involving "inquiry" was not forgotten. (Comp. *The Translators to the Reader*:—"This will be easily granted by as many as know story, or have any experience.") These Midrashim sprang up after the Captivity, when the people had lost the older language of the Law and the Prophets; and paraphrases, expositions, and homilies, became at first indeed necessary, but grew into a vast and intricate system with "Secrets" and "Precepts," and "Fences" and "Traditions of Elders" (Matt. xv. 2; Mark vii. 3), which gave abundant room for the learning and pride of men, but made the word of God of none effect (Matt. xv. 6; Mark vii. 13). Now, the period of the arrangement of the Midrashim of the Law commenced half a century before the ministry of Christ. Hillel the First succeeded to the presidency of the Sanhedrin, b.c. 30, and Akiba, his successor in the compilation of the Mishna, was a boy when these words were spoken. The influence of the former was all-powerful among those who now accused Jesus of breaking, what the Law did not contain but the Midrash did. Those who now listened to Christ were disciples or assistants of the great Rabbi, whose school of a thousand pupils left eighty names of note.

May it not be, then, that the true

me. <sup>(40)</sup> And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. <sup>(41)</sup> I receive not honour from men. <sup>(42)</sup> But

I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. <sup>(43)</sup> I am come in my Father's name, and ye

meaning of these words is to be found in their bearing upon these Rabbinic lives and works?—“Ye make your Midrashim on the Scriptures; ye explain, and comment, and seek for hidden mystic meaning; ye do all this because ye think they contain eternal life; their true meaning is not hidden; they tell of life, and ye who seek it do not hear them, and will not come unto Me that ye might have life.”

<sup>(40)</sup> **And ye will not come to me.**—The real hindrance is once more traced to the will. (See Note on chap. iii. 9.) It is moral, not intellectual. The result of a true willingness to know the truth is certain, not problematic. “Ye search because ye think ye have: if ye were willing to come, ye should really have.”

The lesson is wide in its bearing. The Rabbinic spirit is not confined to Rabbis, nor is the merely literal study of the Scriptures limited to those of Judæa. Dictionaries, and grammars, and commentaries, are tools; but the precious ore is in the mine, and is to be extracted by every man for himself. He who wisely uses the best means, will know most of God and His truth; but this knowledge no man can purchase, and the essentials of it none need lack. It is to be learned in the closet, rather than in the library; in action and trust, rather than in scholarship and thought. Religion is not philosophy, and the world by knowledge has never known God. For every humble heart that

willeth to be a scholar, God Himself willeth to be the Teacher.

<sup>(41)</sup> **I receive not honour.**—The word is better rendered *glory* here, and in verse 44. Jesus continues to dwell, in the remainder of the discourse (verses 41—47), on the true cause of their incredulity. “Ye will not come to Me” is the central thought. But were they, then, to follow this young Teacher, while they themselves had schools and disciples who held their teaching sacred, and their persons in honour, and addressed them as “Rabbi?” No! this is not the true coming to Him. They seek glory from men; He does not receive it (verse 34).

<sup>(42)</sup> **Ye have not the love of God.**—The principle which excludes the seeking honour from men, is the love of God. They were, they said, jealous for God's honour. The first precept of the Law, and the foundation of the Theocracy, was the love of God. This every Jew professed, and bound round brow and arm the holy texts which declared it. (Deut. vi. 4—9; xi. 13—21). The Pharisees made broad the phylacteries which contained these words (Matt. xxiii. 5). They had them without, but they had not the principle within. There were sure marks which He had read in the heart as plain as the letters worn on the body, and therefore knew that they had not the love of God in them.

<sup>(43)</sup> **I am come in my**

receive me not : if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

<sup>a</sup> ch. 43.

(44) How can ye believe,<sup>a</sup> which receive honour one of another, and seek not

**Father's name.**—So far from self-assertion or honour-seeking, He came in the name of, and as representing, the Father; guided only by His will, doing only His work (chap. iv. 34). Had they loved the Father, they must have received and reverenced His Son (chap. viii. 42; Matt. xxi. 37 *et seq.*). The absence of love is at the root of the rejection. The true Israelite became the true Christian (chap. i. 47); but these were not true members of the Old Covenant, and could not therefore pass into the New.

**If another shall come in his own name.**—Comp. the direct prophecy of false Christs and prophets in Matt. xxiv. 24. The word "come" in this clause links the meaning with that of the "come" in the previous clause, and is to be understood of a false Messianic claim in opposition to the true. Sixty-four false Christs have been enumerated as appearing after the true Christ, and these words are often taken as a prophecy of one of the most famous of these, as Bar-Kochba. Not a few of the Fathers have understood the words of Antichrist. Perhaps the only definite reference is to the mental condition of the Jews. They would receive any other who came in his own authority, and seeking his own glory. There would be no higher principle to which everything must yield. The seeker of power would fulfil their carnal interpretation of Messianic hopes. He would flatter and honour them,

and therefore they would receive him.

(44) **How can ye believe . . . ?**—The emphasis is again on the pronoun. It is not possible that *ye* should believe in Me, as our whole position is entirely different. Ye receive glory from men; I do not (verse 41). I am come in My Father's name (verse 43); ye do not seek the glory which is from God. We are, then, in wholly distinct spheres of life, and action, and thought. To believe would be to give up your whole present life. While *ye* are what *ye* are, it cannot be.

The marginal reference compares the parallel thought of chap. xii. 43. This is obscured in the English version by a difference of words for the same Greek word. Here, as in verse 41, it would be more exact to read *glory* for "honour," and in chap. xii. 43, *glory* for "praise."

**From God only.**—Better, *from the only God*. Comp. Rom. xvi. 27; 1 Tim. i. 17, and vi. 15, 16; Jude 25. The article before "glory" should be noted. They received glory one of another. They sought not *the* glory, which was a divine attribute. (Comp. chap. i. 14.) Their charge against Him was that He made Himself equal with God. Thinking themselves monotheists, they were really idolaters. Each man, receiving glory from another, was in the place of a god to that other. Each man giving this glory to another, was rendering to a fellow man that

the honour that cometh from God only? <sup>(45)</sup> Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.

<sup>a</sup> Gen. 3.  
15;  
Deut.  
18. 15.

<sup>(46)</sup> For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.<sup>a</sup> <sup>(47)</sup> But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

which belonged to God only. They, not He, were robbing God of His glory.

<sup>(45)</sup> **Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father.**—His words were words of direct accusation, which must have cut to the very quick. He had come from the Father, and it might have seemed to follow from what He said, that He would accuse them to the Father. He guards against this misinterpretation. Love cannot accuse; He cannot be an accuser. He is ever a judge, only because love must judge hatred, and light must judge darkness, by revealing it. (Comp. Note on chap. iii. 19.) And yet the very revelation of love and light, condemns hatred and darkness. The heart, then, needs no accuser, for it accuses itself; it needs no sentence, for it condemns itself. There is no penalty so fearful as that of the soul which is awakened to its own sin, and cannot itself forgive that sin, and, therefore, cannot receive the forgiveness of the Infinite Love, which always forgives. Their accusation was their rejection of light and love in the past, and Moses was their accuser. This is the thought of the following verses.

<sup>(46)</sup> **For had ye believed Moses.**—The present incredulity springs from that of the past. If they had really believed Moses,

they would have seen in the whole spirit of the Pentateuch a manifestation of God, which would have led them to the fuller manifestation in Christ. Worship, and sacrifice, and offering, and priesthood, were all meant to teach. Their very name for "law" (*Thorah*) meant "instruction." But they accepted what the senses could know, and never went down beneath this surface to its true significance—*i.e.*, they never believed Moses. We have here, in another form, the thought of verses 39, 40.

**For he wrote of me.**—See the marginal references; but the thought is not to be confined to these passages.

<sup>(47)</sup> **But if ye believe not his writings . . .**—The emphasis of the contrast here is not between "writings" and "words," but between "his" and "My." It is a repetition of the thought of the previous verse, with an advance in time. They had not believed Moses, and therefore had not believed Him. They do not believe, for they do not read the spiritual meaning of the writings of Moses even now. What ground of hope is left? His words, revealing the deeper truths of the kingdom of God, will fall upon their ears as so many unmeaning sounds. (Comp. Note on chap. in. 12.)

## CHAPTER VI.—

A.D. 32

(a) After these things Jesus

went over the sea of Galilee, which is *the sea of*

## VI.

[(1) JESUS IS LIFE (continued).]

(b) *His Incarnation is life for mankind* (chap. vi.).

(a) Food given to sustain the hungry (verses 1—15).

(β) His body not subject to natural laws (verses 16—21).

(γ) The multitude follow Him (verses 22—25).

(δ) Teaching of Jesus (verses 26—58):

    The work of God  
        (verses 26—29);    The Bread of Life  
        (verses 30—50);    The true food and the  
        true drink (verses  
        15—58).(ε) The effect of the teaching  
    —on the one hand de-  
    fection, on the other a  
    fuller confession of faith  
    (verses 59—71).]

The feeding of the Five Thousand is the one miracle related in every Gospel. See Matt. xiv. 13—21; Mark vi. 30—44; Luke ix. 10—17. The student will, of course, distinguish it from the feeding of the Four Thousand (Matt. xv. 32, 39; Mark viii. 1—9). Here it will be enough to mark the details of this miracle peculiar to St. John.

The fact that this miracle of the Galilæan ministry finds a place also in the record of the Judæan ministry is to be explained by the discourse which follows. Here, as elsewhere, the principle which has guided the writer's choice is that the sign is a teaching by work (comp. Note on chap. ii. 11), and that these signs

produce the fullest faith and life (chap. xx. 31) which led up to the fullest teaching by word. We shall find, too (verse 41), that the discourse is addressed to Jews of Jerusalem among others, so that the chapter, though belonging locally to Galilee, is really within the sphere of St. John's narrative.

(1) After these things . . .

Allowing an undefined interval, which is filled up by the earlier Gospels. We need not adopt the purely arbitrary supposition that a portion of the Gospel between chaps. v. and vi. has been lost, nor yet connect them in immediate order of time. For St. John the discourse is that for which the whole is recorded. The exact sequence of events is by him left undetermined.

**Went over the sea of Galilee**—i.e., crossed over from Galilee to the eastern side of the lake.

**Sea of Tiberias.**—Comp. chap. xxi. 1; but the phrases are not precisely the same. There it is simply “sea of Tiberias.” Here it is “sea of Galilee, of Tiberias,” the latter term being either an alternative rendering for Greek readers (comp. Note on chap. i. 28), or a limitation to that part of the lake which was opposite to Tiberias. We shall find reason to believe that the last chapter of the Gospel should be regarded as an appendix, and the present passage may mark the transition between the older names for the lake which meet us in the other Gospels, and the later name, which meets us for the first time in St. John, but was afterwards common

Tiberias. <sup>(2)</sup> And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. <sup>(3)</sup> And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. <sup>(4)</sup> And the

<sup>a</sup> Lev. 23.  
5; Deut.  
16. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Matt.  
14. 14.

passover,<sup>a</sup> a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

<sup>(5)</sup> When Jesus then lifted up *his eyes*,<sup>b</sup> and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may

in Greek writers. The town itself is named in the New Testament only in this chapter, verse 23. It was on the west of the lake, and is the present well-known *Tabariyeh*. Built by Herod the Tetrarch, it was in accordance to the Herodian policy of courting Rome, named after the Emperor Tiberius. Eusebius tells us that it was commenced in the fourteenth year of Tiberius, which is itself an uncertain date (comp. Note on chap. ii. 20); but we may accept it as placing the building in the time of our Lord, and as explaining that the name of the town does not meet us in the earlier Gospels; while it has at a late date, and at all events for Greek readers, extended to the lake.

<sup>(2)</sup> **A great multitude . . .**—This is explained by the facts (1) that the Baptist had been put to death, and that those who had followed him would now follow Christ; (2) that the Twelve had now returned from their ministry in the towns and villages of Galilee; (3) that the Passover was at hand, and that numbers would be flocking from Northern Palestine to Jerusalem.

**Followed . . . saw . . . did.**—Better, *were following . . . were beholding . . . was doing*. It does not mean simply that they saw these miracles on the west of the lake, and

followed Him across it; but that He kept on healing the sick, and that the crowds kept on following Him. The usual caravan-road for the northern pilgrims was on the side of the lake, and the throng would increase as He went.

<sup>(3)</sup> **A mountain.**—Better, *the mountain*, or, perhaps, the *hill-country* on the east shore of the sea. See the parallel passages.

<sup>(4)</sup> **A feast.**—Better, *the feast*. Comp. chap. v. 1. This is added by St. John only, and is not simply a note of time, but gives a key of interpretation to the sign itself, and to the discourse which followed.

<sup>(5)</sup> **When Jesus then lifted up his eyes . . .**—The converse with Philip is also peculiar to this Gospel. (Comp. chap. xiv. 8 *et seq.*) The impression of the immediate antecedents of the miracle is different from, but not opposed to, that of the other narratives. They all represent the request coming from the disciples as the first step. St. John does not say it was not so. They represent what took place as seen from the outer circle; he, from the point of view of those near to His Master. We may think of the group of disciples seated round Him, and of the first-called Andrew and Peter, James and John, and Philip (comp. chap. i. 40 *et seq.*) as closer to Him

eat? <sup>(6)</sup> And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. <sup>(7)</sup> Philip answered him, Two hundred penny-

worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. <sup>(8)</sup> One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon

than the others, who come and speak to Him about the multitudes. While the wants of all are present, the wants of the individuals are not absent. There is something in the character of Philip which this occasion may test. To him is the question spoken which may yet have been an answer to their remark.

**Saw a great company come.**—Better, *saw that a great multitude cometh.* It is the vivid present of the crowd coming.

**Whence shall we buy bread?**—or rather, *Whence are we to buy bread?* with the best MSS.

**(6) And this he said to prove him.**—This gives us a glimpse into the educational method of the great Teacher. There is for Him no difficulty. He of Himself knows what He is about to do. But Philip had, we may think, been present at Cana of Galilee, and had seen the wine multiplied to supply the needs of all. Other signs had spoken to the eye, and a fuller teaching had spoken to the ear. How far had either spoken to the spirit? He had felt the Divine Presence in separate instances. Had he realised it as a law of life, holding for every need that could arise? The student has learnt individual facts, but has he laid hold of the principle which underlies them? The one is from without, and depends upon the teacher; the other is from within, and is the true education of the man himself. He has been taught; he is now to be examined.

**(7) Philip answered him.**—The answer proves that Philip has not really learnt the lessons of the earlier teaching. The question does not suggest to him the true answer of divine sufficiency, but leads him to think of the human difficulty. He looks on the vast throng of people. At the lowest estimate, it would take the value of 200 denarii to feed them—in present money-value nearly £7; in actual labour value nearly a workman's yearly wage. The denarius is the value of a day's work in the parable (Matt. xx. 2 *et seq.*). In A.D. 14, on the accession of Tiberius, one of the causes of revolt in the Pannonian legions is the smallness of their pay, and one of their demands (Tacit. *Ann.* i. 26) is a penny a day. For Philip this large sum seems an impossibility. He states the difficulty and leaves it.

**(8) One of his disciples.**—Within the inner circle around Him—and this, too, is told us only by St. John—is another of the early disciples. He was one of the two disciples of the Baptist who first followed Jesus, and John's own companion (chap. i. 40). He is always named as one of the first group of the Twelve (comp. Matt. x. 2), and in some way was specially connected with Philip (chap. i. 44). Here, and in chap. xii. 22 (see Note), they are named together, and also in the lists in Mark iii. 18, and Acts i. 13.

Peter's brother, saith unto him, <sup>(9)</sup> There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? <sup>(10)</sup> And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

<sup>(11)</sup> And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. <sup>(12)</sup> When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that

<sup>(9)</sup> **There is a lad here . . .**—Again the account of the eye-witness is the more full and lifelike. All tell of the five loaves and two fishes. John knows that they are barley-loaves—the ordinary black bread of the Galilæan peasant; and that the loaves and fishes are not the property of the disciples, but of a lad or slave who has followed the crowd, in the hope, it may be, of finding a purchaser for them.

The word for “lad” is a diminutive occurring only here (not in the best text of Matt. xi. 16), and in many MSS. is accompanied by “one.” The word may mean a servant, but it more probably means a child. One lad! What could he bear for so many?

**Two small fishes.**—Better, *two fishes*. This word, too, is rightly regarded as a diminutive, but it is not a diminutive of “fish.” The original root means *to boil*; thus the substantive is used, as in Homer, of boiled meat, and then of anything eaten as a relish with bread, and specially of fish. This diminutive is used in the New Testament only here and in verse 11, and in chap. xxi. verses 9, 10, 13. A comparison of the passages

will make it clear that St. John means by the word the ordinary relish of fish, which formed, with bread, the staple food of the people.

The whole force of Andrew’s remark, with its diminutive words, rests upon the smallness of their power to help; while Philip had dwelt on the greatness of the need.

<sup>(10)</sup> **Much grass.**—This is an addition in this account. St. Mark, who also represents the impression of an eye-witness, tells us that the grass was green (chap. vi. 39). We know from verse 4 that it was at the time of the Passover—*i.e.*, about our April, when the hill-country on the west of the lake would naturally be clothed with verdure.

**So the men sat down.**—The word (*ἀνδρες*) means *men* as such, as distinct from women. (Comp. Note on chap. i. 51.) St. Matthew tells us there were five thousand men besides the women and children (chap. xiv. 21).

<sup>(11)</sup> The better MSS. omit “to the disciples, and the disciples to.” It is included in the sense, but is not here expressed in word.

<sup>(12)</sup> **Gather up the fragments.**—Again St. John connects

nothing be lost. <sup>(13)</sup> Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. <sup>(14)</sup> Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

<sup>a</sup> Matt.  
14. 23.

<sup>(15)</sup> When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

<sup>(16)</sup> And when even was now come,<sup>a</sup> his disciples went down unto the sea, <sup>(17)</sup> and entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And

immediately with our Lord what the other Evangelists relate of the disciples. It is from this passage only that we know that the gathering of the fragments followed His express command.

<sup>(13)</sup> **Twelve baskets . . .**—The word for basket is *kophinos*. It is the small hand-basket. (Comp. Juv. Sat. iii. 14; vi. 541.) In the miracle of the Four Thousand the word is *spuris*, which was large enough to hold a man (Acts ix. 25).

<sup>(14)</sup> **Miracle.**—Better, *sign*. (Comp. chap. ii. 11.)

**That Jesus did.**—Better, *that He did*. The example is instructive, as showing how words were added at the beginning of a portion read in church. Many examples of this may be found in the Book of Common Prayer, as, for instance, in the Gospel for Quinquagesima.

**This is of a truth that prophet.**—This verse is peculiar to St. John. The reception or rejection of Christ is always present to his thoughts. He remembers that the effect of the miracle on the minds of those men was that they were convinced that this was

the Prophet whom they expected, and for whom they had before taken John the Baptist (chap. i. 21).

<sup>(15)</sup> **When Jesus therefore perceived . . .**—St. John has told us of the effect of the sign on the multitude. He knows also the reason of Christ's retirement, while St. Matthew and St. Mark only state the fact that He retired to pray. They knew not that He wished to avoid that throng of people who thought of the Messiah as a temporal king, and would have borne Him with them to the great feast at the royal city. St. Luke does not contain this section, but comp. chap. ix. 18 *et seq.*

**A mountain.**—Better, *the mountain, or the hill-country* (verse 3). He withdrew again to the place where He was before.

<sup>(16)</sup> **Even**—*i.e.*, what was known as the “second evening,” from the twelfth hour until “it was now dark” (verse 17).

<sup>(17)</sup> **And entered into a ship.**—For “a ship,” the received text has, with some of the best MSS., *the ship*—*i.e.*, the ship in which they first crossed. For “went over

it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.

<sup>(18)</sup> And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. <sup>(19)</sup> So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs,

they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. <sup>(20)</sup> But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. <sup>(21)</sup> Then they willingly received him

the sea," read *were going over the sea*. The voyage is described as still continuing.

**Toward Capernaum.**—St. Matthew speaks more generally of the other (*i.e.*, the western) side. St. Mark of Bethsaida, which was distinct from Bethsaida Julias, on the east of the lake. (Comp. Luke. ix. 10.) The researches of the Palestine Exploration Society may perhaps be considered to have settled the vexed question of the position of Capernaum in favour of *Tell-Hûm*, on the shore of the lake. The modern name is probably a remnant of the older form, *Caphas* having been displaced by *Tell*. (Comp. Matt. iv. 13, and Note on verse 59 in this chapter.)

<sup>(18)</sup> **And the sea arose.**—Better, *was rising*. The tense is still imperfect, describing the scene as it took place. The sea was then being agitated by the wind.

<sup>(19)</sup> **Five and twenty or thirty furlongs**—*i.e.*, about half their voyage. Josephus describes the lake as forty furlongs wide (*Wars*, iii. 10, § 7). Comp. Matt. xiv. 25.

<sup>(20)</sup> See the same words in Mark vi. 50. St. Matthew's account is more full here, adding the trial of St. Peter's faith.

<sup>(21)</sup> **Then they willingly received him.**—This is doubtless correct as an interpretation, but it

is too full for a translation. The Greek cannot mean more than, "Then they were willing to receive Him." They are re-assured by His voice, and their fears cease. That they did receive Him into the ship is stated by St. Matthew and St. Mark, and is implied here. That the words may mean more than a "wish" to receive Him is shown by St. John's usage in chaps. i. 44; v. 35; viii. 34.

**And immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.**—Better, . . . *whither they were going*. It follows from verse 19 that they were at this time about half-way across the lake—*i.e.*, from two to three miles from the shore. No such explanation as that they were near the shore, but in the darkness and confusion of the storm did not know it, is consistent with the plain meaning of these definite words. On the other hand, it is not necessary to suppose that St. John here adds the narrative of another miracle. Where all was miraculous this may well, indeed, have been thought so too; but the analogy of the miracles of our Lord does not lead us to expect the use of divine power to accomplish what was within the reach of human effort. It would on this supposition be difficult to understand why the earlier Gospels omit what would surely have seemed

into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

<sup>(22)</sup> The day following,

to be among the greatest miracles; and why St. John mentions it only in a passing sentence. The words appear rather to contrast the ease and rapidity with which the second half of the voyage was accomplished in His presence, before which the winds and waves were hushed into a calm, and their fears and doubts passed into courage and hope; with the first half, when the sea kept rising, and a strong wind kept blowing, and they rowed against it for five-and-twenty or thirty furlongs. The word rendered "immediately"—which is more exactly our *straightway*—may find its full meaning in the straight line of the boat's after-course, as contrasted with its being tossed hither and thither during the storm. The whole context seems to find its full meaning in the sense of difficulty and danger, before our Lord was received into the boat, and in the sense of safety and peace afterwards. The Psalmist of the English *Christian Year* has expressed this in familiar words—

"Thou Framer of the light and dark,  
Steer through the tempest Thine  
own ark:

Amid the howling wintry sea  
*We are in port if we have Thee.*"

It is scarcely too much to think that the familiar words of him who is Psalmist of Jewish and Christian year alike were present to the mind of St. John—

"For He commandeth, and raiseth  
the stormy wind,  
Which lifteth up the waves of (the  
deep).

when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save

They mount up to the heaven,  
They go down again to the depths:  
Their soul is melted because of  
trouble.

He maketh the storm a calm,  
So that the waves thereof are  
still.  
Then are they glad because they be  
quiet;  
*So he bringeth them unto their  
desired haven.*"

(See the whole passage, Ps. cvii. 23—33.)

The miracle is followed in the other accounts by the healings in the land of Gennesaret. (See Matt. xiv. 34—36; Mark vi. 53—56.) For St. John the whole leads up to the discourse at Capernaum. He has told how our Lord and the disciples have crossed again to the west of the lake, but the narrative at once returns to the multitude who have seen the sign, and for whom there remains the interpretation.

<sup>(22)</sup> The people.—Better, *the multitude*. It is the same word which in verse 5 is rendered "company."

On the other side of the sea—i.e., on the eastern side. The writer's starting-point is now Capernaum. In verse 25 the same words mean the western side, the starting-point of the multitude being the scene of the miracle.

Save that one whereinto his disciples were entered.—Better, *save one*, with the best MSS. The addition has arisen from an explanatory gloss.

that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone; <sup>(23)</sup> (howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks;) <sup>(24)</sup> when the people therefore saw

that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. <sup>(25)</sup> And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

<sup>(26)</sup> Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me,

<sup>(23)</sup> Howbeit there came other boats.—This is a parenthesis to explain the fact that while on the previous evening they saw only one boat, there were now several. The multitude came in part from the west of the lake, and the boats crossed over in the morning for them. It is possible that a harbour, or centre of merchandise, is pointed out by "nigh unto the place."

**The Lord had given thanks.**—This act had impressed itself upon the writer. Because the Lord had blessed the bread it was that the multitude had wherewithal to eat.

<sup>(24)</sup> When the people.—Better, *the multitude*, as before. It is not necessary to suppose that the whole 5,000 crossed over. The crowd came probably in part from the eastern side, and many would continue their journey to Jerusalem (comp. verse 2). If indeed we press the words of verse 22, "the multitude which (still) stood on the other side of the sea," they would include the remnant only.

**Therefore saw.**—Resuming verse 22. The sentence is long

and involved, and this has been, as we may expect, followed by some variations in the text. "Saw," in verse 22, should be interpreted of the previous evening, and the same word here of the day of their own embarking. They knew there was only one boat, and that the disciples had gone away in it, but Jesus had not. They expected therefore to find Him among themselves, but did not. Meanwhile, other boats had come across from Tiberias. From these they may have learnt that He was not there.

**They also took shipping.**—*Better, they themselves entered into the boats.*

<sup>(25)</sup> **Rabbi, when camest thou hither?**—This discourse took place in the synagogue at Capernaum (verse 59). They are amazed to find Him here. When and how could he have come? He had not gone in the boat with the disciples, and no other boats had crossed but those in which they themselves came. On the title Rabbi, see Note on chap. i. 38.

<sup>(26)</sup> Jesus does not answer their question. There is an earlier sign than that about which they now

not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. (27) Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 3.  
17.  
<sup>1</sup> Or.  
Work  
not.

of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.<sup>a</sup> (28) Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? (29) Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the

ask, the spiritual significance of which neither they nor the disciples have realised (Mark vi. 52). He does not satisfy their curiosity, but with the solemn "Verily, verily," begins to reveal this hidden truth.

**Not because ye saw the miracles.**—Better, *not because ye saw signs*. There is no article in the original, and the common rendering "miracles" quite misses the sense. They had seen miracles and had felt their force as wonders; what they had not done was to enter into the spiritual significance, and see in them signs of the eternal truth. They regarded the whole matter from without. It was to them nothing more than an eating yesterday, which may be repeated to-day; or it may be He will allow them to take Him and make Him King now, though He did not then.

(27) **Labour not for the meat which perisheth.**—This is one of the instances in which the reader of the English Bible has in the margin a much better rendering than in the text. *Work not* shows the verbal connection with verses 28, 29, 30, which is wholly lost in "labour not." It will be instructive to compare the other passages in this Gospel where the word occurs: chaps. iii. 21 (*wrought*

in God); v. 17; ix. 4. *Work not* is better than "work not for," by which the words have been sometimes rendered. The sense is, "Work not out—let it not be the result of your constant working—to have food (comp. chap. iv. 32) which perisheth; but let your work be one worthy of your endeavour, food which endureth unto eternal life, which food the Son of Man will give to you."

**For him hath God the Father sealed.**—The emphasis of the original is seen better by preserving the order of the words, *for Him hath the Father sealed, even God.* (Comp. Note on chap. iii. 33.)

(28) **What shall we do, that we might work . . .?**—This verse confirms the meaning given to the preceding words. They understand them in that sense. There are works for them to do which are appointed of God. What shall they do, that they may work these works? They had seen Him doing mighty works, which clearly showed the power of God. Are there for them works of a like kind? What steps must they take that they too may work them?

(29) **This is the work of God.**—They speak of "works," regarding life as an aggregate of individual deeds. He speaks of "work," regarding separate acts

work of God,<sup>a</sup> that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

(30) They said therefore unto him, What sign shew-

<sup>a</sup> 1 John  
3. 23.

<sup>b</sup> Ex. 16.  
15;  
Num.  
11. 7.

est thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? (31) Our fathers did eat manna in the desert;<sup>b</sup> as it is written,

as the outcome of principle. His own works (chap. v. 36) made one complete work (chap. xvii. 4). They had one great work to do, which indeed seemed not a work, but which when realised would be the living principle of every work, and would be as food abiding unto eternal life.

**That ye believe on him whom he hath sent.**—Comp. chap. v. 24. To believe on Him whom God hath sent, is already to have the spiritual life which is eternal. The contrast of the words comes to us across the discussions of many centuries, speaking to the angry waves which arise in men's souls and bidding them be still. Faith and work, then, are one. As soul and body, they together make one life. The energy of every work is in the faith which links the soul with God; the outcome of all faith is in the act which links the soul with man. The work of life is faith; and "faith worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6).

(30) **What dost thou work?**—They feel that His words are an assertion that He is the Messiah, and they demand of Him Messianic signs and works. Do they demand a sign who had seen the thousands fed, and would then have made Him a king? It was but yesterday that He was obliged to withdraw from the enthusiasm of the multitude. Do they to-day need a further proof? The answer is to

be found partly in the fact that a feeling soon quickened is soon cooled, and that even the disciples had not learnt the true meaning of the earlier sign (verse 19); and partly in the fact that He Himself had taught them since, that the work of life was spiritual and eternal, and that He too could give them that food. This seems to them a claim to a power in the world of spirit analogous to that which He had exercised in the world of matter. They demand proof of this power. Where is the sign of it? What is the work that He Himself does, answering to the work of faith which He demands from them?

(31) **Our fathers did eat manna.**—He claims to be the Messiah; but the Messiah was to be greater than Moses, and the sign He has shown is less. The Messiah was to cause manna again to fall from heaven, as their Rabbi taught. They had eaten food which, if miraculously multiplied, was still the food of earth—the common bread and common relish—and this on the grassy sward not far removed from the habitations of men. Their fathers had eaten the manna which came direct from God, and was gathered from the granite rocks of the desert; and the Psalmist had told, and Hebrew children loved to chant, that "bread from heaven was that which He gave them to eat."

He gave them bread from heaven to eat.<sup>a</sup> (32) Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 78.  
25.

(33) For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. (34) Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. (35) And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread

(32) **Moses gave you not that bread.**—Again His solemn words bring to their thoughts the deeper reality which they are passing over. They had implied a contrast between their fathers and themselves, between Moses and Jesus. They expressed the glory of the Mosaic sign in the language of the Psalm; but there the gift is ascribed to God, and it is named to mark the darkness of their unbelief. The gift of God was ever the same. He it was who gave then; He it is who ever giveth. “You think of Moses; but Moses was the messenger of My Father. You speak of bread from heaven; but heaven is My home, from which I am come to give the true bread to the world, which in very truth is its sustenance.” (Comp., for the full sense of “true,” the Note on chap. i. 9.)

(33) **He which.**—Better, *that which*. The identification with Himself does not occur before verse 35. This verse is a fuller expression of the last clause of verse 32, to which each term answers.

“My Father giveth” . . . “the bread of God.”

“The (ideally) true bread” . . . “giveth life unto the world.”

“From heaven” . . . “which cometh down from heaven.”

The tenses are present. (Comp. Notes on verses 50 and 51.) The manna in the wilderness was but one instance of that which is constant. The Jewish nation was but one unit in the Father’s family. The bread of God ever cometh and ever giveth life; and the life which it giveth is for the world. Every word proceeding from the mouth of God, spoken in many portions and in many ways, was part of the true food for the true life of man.

(34) **Lord, evermore give us** . . . —Comp. Note on chap. iv. 15. It would be better to read *Sir* for “Lord” here, as there. They, as the Samaritan woman, think of the satisfaction of physical need. They do not realise that man does not live by bread alone. The manna fell from heaven and gave life to their fathers; He has spoken of bread of God coming in the same way and giving life, He has given them bread on earth, which they ate yesterday, but they hunger again to-day. Could He give them “evermore this bread?”

(35) **I am the bread of life.**—Comp. again the conversation with the woman of Samaria. Here they have asked for “this bread,” the bread which giveth life, as distinct from that which perisheth. It is now present with them. He is that bread, whose characteristic is

of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

(<sup>36</sup>) But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. (<sup>37</sup>) All that the Father giveth me

life. He is the Word of God, revealing God to man, teaching the eternal truths which are the life of the spirit just as bread is of the body.

**He that cometh to me . . . he that believeth on me.**—The natural bread satisfied no need unless it was appropriated and eaten. Prompted by hunger, they had taken into hand and mouth the loaves He had given them, and were filled. The same law holds for the spiritual bread. It is taken by him who comes to Christ; it is eaten by him who believes on Him, and it satisfies every need. It sustains the spiritual life in strength, and refreshes it in weariness. The bread of life giveth a principle of life, and he who hungereth and thirsteth for it shall also be filled, but with that which abideth, so that he shall never hunger and shall never thirst. (Comp. Matt. v. 6.)

(<sup>36</sup>) **But I said unto you . . .**—There is no record of this saying. It was included in the thoughts of chap. v. 37—44, and was perhaps uttered then, or, more probably, to those whom He is now addressing. That there are many words of Christ which have not been preserved to us is certain. (Comp. Notes on chap. xx. 30, 31.) It is possible, but scarcely more than this, that the words refer to what He was about to say.

**Ye also have seen me.**—The “also” is misplaced. It is not “ye in addition to others,” but *Ye*

*have even seen Me.* Ye have not simply been told, but have had the fullest evidence, amounting to actual seeing. (Comp. chap. xx. 29.) You asked for a sign, that you may see it and believe (verse 30); you have had much more, and do not believe. (Comp. Luke xvi. 29.)

(<sup>37</sup>) **All that the Father giveth me.**—There is something startling in this power of the human will to reject the fullest evidence, and to remain unbelieving, after the proof which it has itself demanded as a foundation for its belief. In that assembly there are representatives of the differing stages of faith and non-faith in Him, which every age of which Christianity has seen. Here are men in the pride of human wisdom rejecting Him because He does not fulfil their own idea of what the Messiah should be. Here are men of humble heart finding in Him the satisfaction of the soul’s deepest wants, and believing and knowing that He is the Holy One of God (verse 69). Here are men of the Nicodemus type, passing from one stage to the other, almost believing, but held back by their will, which willeth not to believe. Here are men, too, of the Judas type (verses 64 and 71), traitors even in the faithful few. For these varying effects there must be a cause, and in the next few verses Jesus dwells upon this. He finds the reason (1) in the eternal will of God, of whose gift it is that man willeth; and (2) in the determination of the will of

shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. <sup>(38)</sup> For

I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that

man, of whose acceptance it is that God giveth. Men have seized now one and now the other of these truths, and have built upon them in separation logical systems of doctrine which are but half-truths. He states them in union. Their reconciliation transcends human reason, but is within the experience of human life. It is, as St. Bernard said, following the words of Jesus, "If there is no free will, there is nothing to save; if there is no free grace there is nothing wherewith to save;" or, in words more familiar to English ears, ". . . . the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will" (the Tenth Article of Religion).

**And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.** —It is not easy to improve the English rendering of this verse, and there is a sacredness in the sound of the old, old words; but still, they convey to few readers the full meaning of the original. The word "come" is made to serve, within two or three lines, for three different Greek words. Literally, we should read, *All that the Father giveth Me shall arrive at Me, and him that is on the way I will in no wise cast out: for I am come down . . . .* The present tense of "giveth" should be noted. The giving is not of an act in the past, but of a ceaseless love ever in the present. The word "all" is the neuter of the collective whole, thought of without reference to

individual action. It is repeated, and still with reference to the gift in verse 39; while in verse 40, with the thought of each man's coming, it passes to the masculine, which marks out the separate life and faith of every unit in the mass.

It may be that the words "come" (*arrive at*) and "cometh" (*is on the way*), contrasted as they are in this verse, refer to the different positions of those who seek Him—to the ninety and nine in the fold, and the one who in the far distance hears His voice and comes in doubt and fear; but the context seems rather to point out the fulfilment of the Messianic Kingdom as the Father's gift, and the individual difficulties of, and individual help given to, those who strive to enter it, and shall in no wise be cast out. There were men among those who heard Him who in darkness and difficulty were feeling their way: these men were guided and strengthened by an unseen hand until they found it; there were men there who were being cast out, but not by Him.

**(38) Not to do mine own will.** —Comp. chap. v. 30. He has spoken of the Father's gift and of human action. He now once more identifies His own will with that of the Father, and yet states the fact of His possessing an independent will. It cannot be that he should cast out any one who comes. He knows, indeed, with the knowledge of human nature, how hard it is for men to read the

sent me. <sup>(39)</sup> And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but

should raise it up again at the last day. <sup>(40)</sup> And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth

spiritual through the sensuous, and what are the hindrances in the way of every seeker of truth. Added to this, He knows, with a divine knowledge, what is the infinite love of the Father, and He has Himself come down from heaven to fulfil heaven's will in love to man.

<sup>(39)</sup> **And this is the Father's will.**—Read, with best MSS., *And this is the will of Him that sent Me.* Comp. Note on verse 40. These two verses further set forth the divine will in the mission of Christ, first in relation to the Father's gift, and then in relation to man's acceptance. Both verses make emphatic the expression of that will in the mission, *Him that sent Me*; both refer its fulfilment to the final victory over sin and death, *at the last day*. Both state the will of God in a single clause, prefaced by the most signal proof of divine love in God revealed on earth, and followed by its end, in man raised to heaven.

The "all" is here neuter, referring to the whole extent of the Messianic work. (Comp. verse 37.) Vast as this is, beyond our power of thought, including all times, and all places, and all nations, and it may be other worlds, it is the divine will that nothing should be lost. In the moral, as well as the physical world, no force can perish.

**Hath given me . . .**—The past tense here, because the gift is

thought of in its completion at the last day. (See verse 37.)

<sup>(40)</sup> **And this is the will of him that sent me.**—Read, *For this is the will of My Father.* (See verse 39.) The common text has inserted the opening words of these verses. There can be no doubt that the change indicated gives the original reading, and it will be seen that the relation of "Father" and "Son" is thus preserved.

**Every one which seeth the Son.**—We pass here to the individuals who compose the great mass of humanity. It is the divine will that no one should be excluded, but that he may have eternal life (comp. chaps. iii. 15 and v. 24): this is the Father's gift in the person of the Son. The exercise of the mental power to see Him, the reception of Him and trust upon Him: this is man's acceptance of God's gift. The word rendered "seeth" means to look upon, to contemplate, and is the first step towards a true faith.

The analogy of the previous verse makes it probable that we should render the last clause of this verse, *and that I should raise him up at the last day.* The difference of tenses is important. The believer has now the principle of eternal life, but this is to be his in its fulness when he shall be raised up at the last day. This thought of the final victory is the joyous refrain of these verses (39, 40, 44).

on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>(41)</sup> The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. <sup>(42)</sup> And they said, Is not this Jesus,<sup>a</sup> the son

<sup>a</sup> Matt.  
13. 55.

of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? <sup>(43)</sup> Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. <sup>(44)</sup> No man can come to me, except the Father

54). The spirit brought into communion with the original source of life becomes life in itself. This life is greater than death, and cannot be holden by it (comp. verse 53).

<sup>(41)</sup> **The Jews murmured at him.**—Better, *concerning Him*, as in chap. vii. 12, 32. Here, too, it was “among themselves” (verse 43). With the true spirit of objectors, they do not regard what He has since said in explanation, but fasten upon what they do not understand in its most striking form. Perhaps they have not listened to what has followed; indeed, the words imply that they were for some time talking to one another, and interrupting His discourse, and that this led to His answering them. They are the Jewish authorities, representing, and probably in part consisting of, members of the Sanhedrin. (Comp. Note on chap. i. 19.)

<sup>(42)</sup> **Is not this Jesus?**—Here is something definite. He has spoken of being the Bread of Life, and of the Bread from Heaven. Putting together verses 33, 35, 38, they in effect quote His words. But His natural descent and birth was in its outer facts well known, though all its mysteries were still stored in the mother’s heart, and waiting for the human life’s comple-

tion before they should be revealed. “Jesus Bar-Joseph” would be the name by which He was commonly called; Joseph and Mary had been known, probably, to many in the crowd; attention had now for more than a year been fixed on Him; and the genealogies would have been searched and local inquiries made. All these indications point to an ordinary life in a Galilean village. It is human, and therefore they think it cannot be divine. They can conceive a coming in the clouds of heaven: that would be a miracle and tell of God; but the birth of a child is no miracle! the existence of life itself—and such an existence, and such a life—is no sign! All this they cannot read. “How does He then say, I am come down from heaven?” (Comp. verse 38 and Note on chap. vii. 27.)

<sup>(43)</sup> **Murmur not among yourselves.**—He does not meet their difficulty. It does not appear, indeed, that it was expressed to Him. He seeks to silence the interruption which their murmuring *among themselves* has caused, and resumes the discourse broken at verse 40.

<sup>(44)</sup> **No man can come to me.**—The subject is still the mystery of the varying effects of His revelation on the minds of men. These depend upon their present mental

which hath sent me draw him : and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>(45)</sup> It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God.<sup>a</sup> Every

<sup>a</sup> Isa. 54.  
13; Jer.  
31.34.

<sup>b</sup> Matt.  
11. 27.

man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. <sup>(46)</sup> Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God,<sup>b</sup> he hath

state, which is itself the result of acceptance of, or rejection of, divine influence. The Father which sent Him had, by law, and prophets, and worship, been preparing them. The history of each individual life had been a succession, in every conscious hour, of influences for good or for evil. The mind stood between these, and willed for one or other. He who day by day, with all his light and strength, however little that all might have been, had sought the pure, and true, and good—had sought really to know God—was drawn of God, and he only it was who could now come to Him whom God sent. Others were drawn of evil, because they had submitted themselves to its power. They had chosen darkness, and could not now see the light ; they had bound themselves in the silken cords of sin, which had hardened into fetters of iron ; they had lost themselves in the labyrinths of what they thought wisdom, and did not recognise the true and living way which was opened for them.

The word “draw” need not perplex us ; and all the theories opposed to the width of divine love and influence, and to the freedom of human will and action, which have been built upon it, are at once seen to be without support, when we remember that the only other passage in the New Testament where it occurs in a moral sense is in the declaration : “And I, if I be

lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me” (chap. xii. 32).

<sup>(45)</sup> **It is written in the prophets . . .** —*i.e.*, in the Book of the Prophets. (Comp. Matt. ii. 23; Mark i. 2; Acts vii. 42, and xiii. 40.) The immediate reference is to the LXX. translation of Isa. liv. 13, but the same thought runs through other passages of the prophets, as Jer. xxxi. 34, and Joel iii. 1 *et seq.*

The words bring out the meaning of the Father’s drawing referred to in verse 44, and point out the extent of the divine teaching by which “all” are taught ; and the personal receptivity and effort by which “every man” hears and learns. The teaching is universal, but it may not be heard, and when heard may not be learnt.

**Every man therefore that hath heard.**—Better, *Every man that hath heard*, omitting “therefore,” with the best MSS.

**Cometh unto me.**—This is co-extensive with the previous hearing and learning. They who had listened for God’s voice would recognise His. They who had been God’s disciples would be His too. (Comp. chap. v. 46.)

<sup>(46)</sup> **Not that any man hath seen the Father . . .**—But this hearing and learning of the Father was the preparation for, not the substitute for, the fuller revelation in the person of the Son. Once again He declares

seen the Father. (47) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. (48) I am that bread of life. (49) Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are

dead. (50) This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. (51) I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of

that "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath been the interpreter." (See Note on chap. i. 18; and comp. chaps. iii. 13 and viii. 38.) Every man, in proportion as he had been taught of God, would feel how little he knew of God; and there would be in him the yearning desire and the trained faculty to see Him who is of God.

(47) **He that believeth.**—This thought gives a new force to what He has said in verse 40. He there declared the Father's will, that every one seeing the Son and believing on Him may have eternal life. No man had ever seen the Father, but the Son was then standing in human form before them, and this will was being accomplished, and for the believer eternal life was not only of the future but of the actual present, "He hath eternal life." (Comp. chaps. iii. 15 and v. 24.)

(48) **I am that bread of life.**—Better, *I am the bread of life*. The words, which seem to them so hard to fathom (verse 41), are only an expression of this truth in the form of their own demand (verse 31). The essence of life is unseen; bread is the visible form which contains and imparts it. The invisible God is the source of eternal life; the human nature of the Son

of God is the visible form which contains and imparts this to the souls of men.

(49) **Your fathers . . . and are dead.**—Better, . . . and died. The manna which their fathers ate (verse 31) seemed to them a greater work than this which He has done. Its true relation to Him is shown in the fact that those who ate it afterwards died; whereas He is the true spiritual food for the world, and those who feed upon Him shall not afterwards die. That was manna, special in time and circumstance; this is bread, the true sustenance for all times and all circumstances. That seemed to them to come from heaven, and this from earth; but this outer earth-born form of flesh contains the true life, in the only way in which humanity could receive it. The life itself cometh down from heaven.

(51) **I am the living bread.**—The words are again repeated (comp. verses 35 and 48), but with a new fulness of meaning. He spoke before of bread which was "of life," characterised by life, producing life. He now speaks of this bread as "living," containing the principle of life in itself. (Comp. chaps. iv. 13, 14; v. 26.) Once again, too, He answers their demand for bread "from heaven" (verse 31). The lifeless manna fell

this bread, he shall live for ever :

And the bread that I will give is my flesh, which

and lay upon the ground until they gathered it, and passed to corruption if they did not. Each day's supply met the need of each day, but met that only. He is the bread containing life in Himself, coming by His own will and act from heaven, living among men, imparting life to those who eat by coming to and believing on Him; so that it becomes in them a principle of life, too, which cannot die, but shall live for ever.

**And the bread that I will give is my flesh.**—The following words, “which I will give,” should be, probably, omitted, and the whole clause should be read—*And the bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world.* The words are in every way full of meaning, and the history of their interpretation is a long chapter in the history of Christian doctrine. Their connection with the words used at the institution of the Lord's Supper will be dealt with in *Excursus D: The Sacramental Teaching of St. John's Gospel.* Their meaning for the immediate hearers, is to be found in the thoughts which led up to them; and which they would suggest to a spiritually-minded Jew. They are, indeed, to be spiritually interpreted (verse 63), and many, even among the disciples, feel it is a hard saying which they cannot hear (verse 60); but the elements of the interpretation are to be sought in the Jewish mind. They have followed Him after a miracle which multiplied a few common barley loaves and fishes, and made them more than enough for thousands (verses 22—

24); He has rebuked the mere bread-seeking spirit, and declared to them the true food (verses 26, 29); they have demanded a sign from heaven like the manna (verses 30, 31); He has answered that the manna was the Father's gift, and that He is the true bread from heaven (verses 32—35); He has shown parenthetically the real ground of their unbelief (verses 36—46), and again returned to the thought of the bread of life which they have murmured at (verses 41, 42), and which He has more fully explained (verses 47—51). He now identifies the bread of which He has spoken with His flesh, and says that He will give that for the life of the world. This form of human flesh is, as bread, the means by which life is conveyed; it is the word by which the Eternal Spirit speaks to the spirit of man. (Comp. chap. i. 14, which is the only other passage in this Gospel; and Luke xxiv. 39, of the resurrection body, which is the only other passage in the New Testament, where the word “flesh” is used of the person of Christ.)

These are the thoughts which have immediately led to these words; but many a chord in the Jewish mind ought to have vibrated to them. The emphatic “I will give,” whether it is repeated or not, refers perhaps to the contrast with Moses (verse 32), but certainly to a gift in the future, and, therefore, not to the Incarnation, but to the Crucifixion. The great teacher, whom many of them had heard, realised that the human form they now looked upon was the “Lamb

I will give for the life of the world. <sup>(52)</sup> The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us *his*

flesh to eat? <sup>(53)</sup> Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink

of God" of Isaiah's prophecy (chap. i. 36, Note). It was now the time of their Paschal Feast (verse 4), when Jewish families were assembling to eat the flesh which told of the deliverance from Egyptian bondage and the birth of the nation's life. Every day of Temple service told of flesh given in sacrifice for sin, and eaten in maintenance of the individual life. His words, uttered at this Passover, and fulfilled at the next, announce a gift of His own flesh as the true Paschal Lamb, as the sacrifice for the sins of the world, and as the sustenance of the true life of mankind.

<sup>(52)</sup> **The Jews therefore strove among themselves.**—They have passed beyond the murmuring of verse 41. They understand that He means, though His own words have not yet expressed it, that His flesh is to be eaten, and is thus to supply the principle of life. They contend one with another as to how this can really be.

<sup>(53)</sup> **Then Jesus said unto them.**—This is hardly strong enough for the original. It is rather, *Jesus therefore said unto them.* The words follow upon those he has heard from them.

Some of them have spoken of eating His flesh. Others may even have pressed this to the *reductio ad horribile*. Eat His flesh? Shall we, then, drink His blood too? In no less than seven passages of the Pentateuch had the eating of blood

been forbidden (Gen. ix. 4; Lev. iii. 17; vii. 26, 27; xvii. 10—14; xix. 26; Deut. xii. 16, 23, 24; xv. 23); and we find in later times the strength of the feeling of abhorrence, as in 1 Sam. xiv. 32, and Ezek. xxxiii. 25, and in the decree of the first Judæo-Christian Council (Acts xv. 29). In the fullest of these passages (Lev. xvii. 10—14), the prohibition is grounded upon the facts that the blood is the physical seat of animal life, and that the blood maketh atonement for the soul. It was the life-element poured out before God instead of the life of the soul that sinned. Such would be the thoughts of those who strove among themselves as to what His words could mean; and to these thoughts He speaks with the "Verily, verily," which ever expresses a spiritual truth that He alone could reveal.

**Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man.**—The words point more definitely than those which have gone before to His death. The blood is spoken of as distinct from the flesh, and in this is involved physical death. The eating the flesh would itself imply, as we have seen above, the thoughts of sacrifice and of sustenance, the removal of the death-penalty attached to sin, and the strength of life sustained by food. But the spiritual truth is fuller and deeper than this; and the true element of life in the soul depends upon such communion with

his blood, ye have no life in you. <sup>(54)</sup> Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at

the last day. <sup>(55)</sup> For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. <sup>(56)</sup> He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood,

Christ as is expressed by drinking the blood itself: that is, by receiving into the human spirit the atonement represented by it, and with this the very principle of life. They may not receive into the human frame the principle of animal life, but no man really has spiritual life who does not receive into the inmost source of his being the life-principle revealed in the person of Christ. This is to pass through and through his moral frame, like the blood which traverses the body—hidden from sight, but passing from the central heart through artery and vein, bearing life in its course to muscle, and nerve, and tissue. It is to traverse the soul, passing from the Eternal Life and Love, which is the heart of the universe, through the humanity of Christ, and carrying in its course life and energy for every child of man.

**Life in you.**—More exactly, *life in yourselves*. This is more fully expressed in verses 56 and 57.

<sup>(54)</sup> **Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood.**—The thought advances from the negative to the positive. The previous verse stated the condition without which they could not have life. This verse declares that they who thus eat and drink possess that life now, and that it is eternal. (Comp. Note on verse 47.) The thought advances, too, from the “ye” of those immediately addressed to the “whoso,” which has no limit but the fulfilment of the condition. The

word for “eateth” is a stronger word than that before used, meaning literally the act of dividing the food by the teeth; but this meaning is not to be pressed. It is simply the present tense, which describes the process of eating, and is the same word which is used in verses 56, 57, 58, and in chap. xiii. 18. The sense of the word in the only other place in the New Testament where it occurs (Matt. xxiv. 38) confirms this view.

**And I will raise him up at the last day.**—The thought of the eternal life, which is the present possession of the spirit in communion with God, leads on once again to the fuller expansion of that life in the final victory over death. (Comp. verses 40 and 44.)

<sup>(55)</sup> **For my flesh is meat indeed.**—Better, *For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink*. This verse further explains that he who eateth the flesh and drinketh the blood hath eternal life, for he has the true elements of life. It is an answer, too, to the question, How can this Man give us His flesh to eat? (verse 52).

<sup>(56)</sup> **Dwellet in me, and I in him.**—*Abideth* gives the sense more fully. (Comp. chaps. xiv. 2—23; xv. 4 *et seq.*; xvii. 23; 1 John iii. 24; iv. 16.) It is one of those deeper thoughts which meet us only in the words of the beloved disciple. The union which results from the communication of life is not temporary, but is one that re-

dwelleteth in me, and I in him. <sup>(57)</sup> As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. <sup>(58)</sup> This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna,

and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

<sup>(59)</sup> These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

<sup>(60)</sup> Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is

maineth. By virtue of it we abide in Christ, and He in us. It is our home life, that of every day; and will be the life of the eternal home (chap. xiv. 2). (Comp. Note on chap. v. 38, and the contrast in chap. iii. 36.)

<sup>(57)</sup> **I live by the Father . . . he shall live by me.**—The preposition “by” here is ambiguous, and it is better, therefore, to render the words, *I live by reason of the Father . . . he shall live by reason of Me*. For the thought of the Father as the original source of life, and as giving this principle of life to the Son, comp. Note on chap. v. 25. He that taketh the Son into his own being, in like manner receives this principle of life from Him.

<sup>(58)</sup> **This is that** (better, *the*) **bread which came down . . . i.e.**, of this nature, which He has expounded from verse 32 onwards. The tense is now in the past, pointing to His historic coming, because He has asserted that He is the bread. (Comp. verses 33 and 38).

**Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead.**—Read, with the best MSS., *not as your fathers did eat, and are dead*.

The discourse ends with that which has been the text of it.

<sup>(59)</sup> **As he taught in Capernaum.**—If we accept the identification of Capernaum with *Tell-Hûm*, which is in every way probable (comp. Note on verse 17), we have good reason for believing that modern discovery has traced out the foundations of the synagogue in which this discourse was spoken. It was a gift to the Jews by a devout Gentile (Luke vii. 5), and as such, of greater architectural beauty than was common among Galilæan synagogues. Corinthian capitals and a heavy cornice and frieze are among the ruins, and the traveller’s eye may rest to-day on the very ornaments which our Lord’s eyes saw there eighteen centuries ago. On one of the lintels of the door he may trace a sculptured pot of manna, and connect with it the thoughts of the manna which the fathers did eat, and died: just as in a Christian church he may trace the emblems of the bread of life, which a man may eat of and not die. A plan and details of the synagogue, with an account by Captain Wilson, R.E., will be found in the *Second Quarterly Statement* of the Palestine Exploration Fund (June, 1869). The same society has published a photograph of the ruins.

<sup>(60)</sup> **Many therefore of his**

an hard saying; who can hear it? <sup>(61)</sup> When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth

<sup>a</sup> ch. 3.  
13.

this offend you? <sup>(62)</sup> What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? <sup>a</sup> <sup>(63)</sup> It is the spirit that quickeneth;

**disciples**—*i.e.*, of the disciples in the wider sense; those who more or less fully were accepting His teaching, and were regarded as His followers. From verse 64, the Apostles would seem to be included in the more general designation. In verse 67 they are separately addressed.

This is an hard saying; who can hear it?—*i.e.*, not hard to be understood, but hard to hear, a stumbling-block in the way of their faith. For the word itself, comp. Matt. xxv. 24. His meaning was, indeed, not read by them, but the literal meaning was painfully clear, and one to which they will not listen. (Comp. chap. x. 20.) They do not raise any formal objection to Him, but friends and companions who had talked together of the Teacher and His teaching before, talk again now; and many of them who have followed Him up to this point can follow Him no more.

(61) When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured.—The tenses in the original describe the scene in the present: Jesus as *knowing*, the disciples as *murmuring*. The knowledge is in Himself, uninformed by them, and His teaching is addressed to the thoughts of their hearts. They were placing themselves in the position of the Jews (verse 41), and were making the stepping-stone of spiritual knowledge, up which faith would have walked,

into a rock of offence over which blindness fell.

(62) What and if ye shall see . . . ?—Our version adds the word "what," as will be seen from the italics, but it rightly expresses the sense. Literally, we should read, *If then ye should behold the Son of Man ascending up where He was before?* The Ascension would be the proof of the coming down from heaven (verse 58), which is part of the teaching they cannot now accept. The margin refers to the more formal statement of this in chap. iii. 13. The reader should also compare chap. xx. 17, where the Ascension is again assumed, and Eph. iv. 9, 10. Comments on these incidental references by St. John to an event he does not record have been made too frequently without noting that, in each case, the speaker is Jesus, to whose thoughts this end of subjection to earthly laws, in subjecting them to Himself, was ever present. St. John, in his own narrative, nowhere mentions the fact of the Ascension, nor does he in any way refer to it. That he could write these words without doing so is an assurance of his own knowledge of the glorious sequel of the Resurrection, and also of its unquestioned acceptance in the Church.

(63) It is the spirit that quickeneth.—The word "quickeneth," though it has almost passed from every-day use, will probably hold its place in theological use,

the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life. <sup>(64)</sup> But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning

who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. <sup>(65)</sup> And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

and convey for the most part the true meaning. If it is retained here, it must, however, be noted that it is a compound of the word rendered "life" at the close of the verse. "It is the spirit that giveth life . . . the words . . . are spirit and are life." These words are immediately connected with the thought of the Ascension, which was to precede the gift of the Spirit. (Comp. chaps. vii. 39 and xvi. 7 *et seq.*) We are to find in them, therefore, a deeper meaning than the ordinary one that His teaching is to be, not carnally, but spiritually understood. They think of a physical eating of His flesh, and this offends them; but what if they, who have thought of bread descending from heaven, see His body ascending into heaven? They will know then that He cannot have meant this. And the Descent of the Spirit will follow the Ascension of the Son, and men full of the Holy Spirit will have brought to their remembrance all these words (chap. xiv. 26), and they will then know what the true feeding on Him is, and these very words which He has spoken will carry their lessons to the inmost being, and be realised, not simply in a spiritual sense, but as spirit and as life.

<sup>(64)</sup> There are some of you that believe not.—Later, the word "disciple" became synony-

mous with the word "believer," but there are those now following Him just as they would follow any Rabbi; and, regarding Him as a merely human teacher, they fall short of the faith which was the first qualification for true discipleship. They had heard, it may be, the Sermon on the Mount, and such teaching as that of Matt. xiii. In part they could understand this, and therefore in part believed; but when faith was really needed, it was found not really to exist: for faith is accepting what is not demonstrable to the mere reason, and seeing what is invisible.

**From the beginning.**—This is a relative term, and is to be interpreted from the context. It means here the beginning of their discipleship. He saw in their hearts the varying kinds of ground on which the good seed fell, and in their acts and words the varying effects. There were hearts like the hardened wayside, but it may have been ploughed; like the stony places, but that shelving rock may have been broken through; like the thorns, but they may have been rooted up; and all may have become, as some were, like the good and fruit-bearing ground.

<sup>(65)</sup> **No man can come unto me.**—Unless the fields had been prepared it was in vain to sow the seed. No effort on the sower's

(66) From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. (67) Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? (68) Then

<sup>a</sup>Matt. 16.  
16.

Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. (69) And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ,<sup>a</sup> the

part could make them receptive. The fact that they believed not, declared that their hearts were not prepared, but did not affect the goodness of the seed. This defection did not surprise Him. He had already used words which anticipated it. (Comp. Note on verses 37 and 44.)

It will be observed that this verse follows in the teaching of Christ immediately on the first clause of verse 64, the second clause being a statement of the writer.

(66) **From that time.**—The addition of the word "time" has given a definite and questionable meaning to the Greek, which is indefinite. "From that" probably means on that account, because of the words He had spoken. The actual departure was the result of the teaching, which tested their faith and found it wanting, and was at that time, not gradually from that time onwards (Comp. Note on chap. xix. 12.)

**Many of his disciples.**—Co-extensive with the same term in verse 60.

(67) **Will ye also go away?**—We have to think of the disciples grouped round Him, the Twelve—now a distinct body, and so well known that St. John names them for the first time without a note—being nearer to Him than the rest, and of these the first four—Peter and Andrew, James and John—the

nearest. Many go away from Him. Men He had taught, borne with in all their weakness and darkness, watched as some light seemed to dawn upon them, hoped for, prayed for, lived for, and would die for, turn back. Yes; that heart, too, can feel the bitterness of disappointment. He looks at the Twelve close to Him, and says to them, *Ye also do not wish to go away?* The question expects the answer it receives. There He has hope still.

(68) **Then Simon Peter answered.**—The look may have been directed to Peter, or here, as elsewhere, his natural character makes him spokesman for the Twelve. And striking is his speech. "Go away? To whom? They had left all to follow Him, and find all in Him. The Baptist is not living, and they know no other teacher. Go away? How could it be, when His words are spirit and eternal life?" (verse 63.)

(69) **And we believe and are sure.**—Better, *We have believed and are sure.* (Comp. chap. i. 41, 42.) Go away? The faith which first burned in their hearts has passed into the calm certainty of settled knowledge.

**Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God,** has found its way into this place from the confession of Matt. xvi. 16. The almost certain reading here is. *Thou art the Holy One of God.*

Son of the living God.  
<sup>(50)</sup> Jesus answered them,  
Have not I chosen you  
twelve, and one of you  
is a devil? <sup>(51)</sup> He spake

of Judas Iscariot *the son* of Simon: for he  
it was that should betray  
him, being one of the  
twelve.

They had heard this title ascribed to Him by beings from the spirit world (comp. Mark i. 24), and it has been, perhaps, suggested by the present discourse (verses 32 and 46). Like the title Messiah, or Christ, it marks out the consecration to His work. (Comp. John x. 30; 1 John ii. 20; Rev. iii. 7.) The true reading brings out the successive confessions, which are certainly twice, and probably three times, spoken by Peter. This is the second, coming between that of Matt. xiv. 33 and that of Matt. xvi. 16.

<sup>(50)</sup> **One of you is a devil.**—But even the brightness of His hope in them is not uncrossed by a shadow; and this shadow is seen in its fearful darkness by the light of the truth, which, like a flash of inspiration, has come to Peter's heart, and has been spoken in the names of all. No human joy is for the Man of Sorrows unmarred. The very height to which these eleven have risen, through doubt and difficulty, in honest hearts and earnest lives, shows the depth to which one, with like power and capacity, like call and opportunity, had fallen. The order of the words is emphatic in the sadness which asks the question, *Did I not choose you twelve, and of you one is devil?* There was the same choice for all, and the choice made, as it is always made, from their fitness and promise for the work for which all were chosen. And of even twelve, one

who was subject for hope then, is beyond hope now. There may be mystery connected with this life of Judas which none of us can understand; there are certainly warnings connected with it which none of us can refuse to heed.

**A devil.**—The meaning would be more exactly given, perhaps, if the word were simply rendered *devil*, but this can hardly be expressed in English.

<sup>(51)</sup> **Judas Iscariot the Son of Simon.**—The best MSS. read, *Judas, the son of Simon Iscariotes*. On the name see the list of the Apostles in Matt. x. 4. If we accept the most probable interpretation of Iscariot as *Ish K'rioth*, a man of *K'rioth*,—and this is supported by the variation of MSS. in this place, some of which read “from Kariotes,” and the best of which, as we see, apply the title Iscariot to Simon—then Judas belonged to the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 25), and is the only one of the Apostles who was not a Galilean (Acts ii. 25). This connects itself with the antagonistic position of the Jews from Jerusalem.

**That should betray him.**—Not indicating that Judas was then planning the betrayal. (Comp. chap. xiii. 2.) This remark is made by the writer to explain the strong words of the previous verse.

**Being one of the twelve.**—Or, although he was one of the Twelve, the exact shade of meaning of the participle being defined by

## CHAPTER VII.—

<sup>1)</sup> After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. <sup>(2)</sup> Now the

A.D. 32.  
<sup>a</sup> Lev. 23. 34.

Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.<sup>a</sup> <sup>(3)</sup> His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that thy disciples also may see the

the context. It marks, again, the tragic contrast between what might have been expected and what was actually realised. One of the Twelve, devil! one of the Twelve, the betrayer!

## VII.

[(2) JESUS IS TRUTH AND LIGHT AND LOVE (chaps. vii. 1—x. 42).

(a) *Jesus is Truth* (chap. vii.).

(a) The Feast of Tabernacles (verses 1—13).

(b) The teaching of Jesus (verses 14—39):

His doctrine is from the Father (verses 15—24);

He is Himself from the Father (verses 25—31);

He will return to the Father (verses 32—39).

(γ) The effect of the teaching. Division among the multitude, and in the Sanhedrin (verses 40—52).]

(1) After these things . . . —

Denoting not immediate sequence, but covering the interval included in this verse—*i.e.*, the Galilean ministry of Matt. xv.—xviii. (Comp. Note on chap. xxi. 1). It would have been natural for Him to have gone up to the Passover of that year (chap. vi. 4), but He did not do so on account of the open hostility of the Jews. He continued his sojourn in Galilee.

Jewry was frequent in the older English translations, but has

been preserved in the Authorised version of the New Testament only here and in Luke xxiii. 5. See Dan. v. 13 and the Prayer Book version of Ps. lxxvi. 1. It of course means Judæa (comp. Shakespeare, *Richard II.*, ii. 1).

(2) The Jews' feast of tabernacles.—This began on “the fifteenth day of the seventh month” (Lev. xxiii. 34), *i.e.*, the 15th of Tishri, which answers to our September. The interval, then, from Passover to Tabernacles is one of about five months. The feast continued for seven days, during which all true Israelites dwelt in booths, in remembrance of their dwelling in tabernacles when they came out of the land of Egypt. Like the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover) and the Feast of Harvest (Pentecost), this Feast of Ingathering was one of the “three times in the year” when every male Jew was required to appear before the Lord God (Ex. xxiii. 14). Josephus speaks of it as the holiest and greatest of the feasts. It was at once a thankful memorial of the national deliverance, and a yearly rejoicing at the close of each succeeding harvest (Deut. xvi. 13—16).

(3) His brethren . . . Comp. *Excursus C: The Brethren of the Lord.* They are excluded here by their own words from the band of disciples, as they are by St. John's from the believers (verse 5); and inferentially (verse 7) by the words

works that thou doest.  
<sup>(4)</sup> For *there is* no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thy-

self to the world. <sup>(5)</sup> For neither did his brethren believe in him. <sup>(6)</sup> Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready.

of Christ Himself from the Twelve. (Comp. chap. xv. 18).

**That thy disciples also may see . . .**—The last time the word “disciples” was used it was to mark the departure of many from Him (chap. vi. 60, 64). The months which have passed since have been a time of comparative retirement. He did not go to the Passover, where many would have expected to see Him (verse 11), but within the narrowed circle continued His works and words. The Prophet hath not honour in His own home, and His brethren, who have seen these works and do not believe, challenge Him to an open demonstration of them. There is another great feast at hand, and His disciples from all parts will be at Jerusalem, where the rulers will test His claims. If He is the Messiah, no conspiracy to kill Him can prevail; and if these works are really divine, let the great body of disciples see them, and amid the joyous feast, and in the royal city, proclaim Him king.

**(4) For there is no man.**—His course of action seems to them to contradict His personal claim. It is opposed, they think, to the common-sense conduct of mankind.

**If thou do these things.**—The emphasis is on *these things*. There is no doubt that He does them; but if the acts themselves are such as they seem to be, and

establish the claim which He bases on them, they should be done in Jerusalem, not in the villages of Galilee. They are for the world, and not for the retirement of home.

**(5) For neither did his brethren believe.**—Comp. Note on verse 3. The words do not admit of any other meaning than the obvious one that even His brethren did not at this time believe Him to be the Messiah. That they are found in the very first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, joining with the Apostles, and the women, and Mary, with one accord in prayer (verse 14), is one of the striking instances of the hardened ground of human hearts passing into the fruitful ground receptive of the seed, as the case of Judas at the close of the last chapter is an instance of the opposite. The immediate cause of the decisive change, was that they had seen the risen Lord (1 Cor. xv. 7).

**(6) My time is not yet come.**—Comp. Note on chap. ii. 4. Here, as there, He regards the events of life as marked out by divinely-ordered seasons. There is for Him a time for solemnly entering Jerusalem with a throng of pilgrims going up to a feast, and in a few months it will have come; but it has not come yet. It is at the feast of the Paschal Lamb, already set apart, and not with the joyous shouts of harvest-tide.

<sup>(7)</sup> The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

a ch. 8. 20.

<sup>(8)</sup> Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.<sup>a</sup> <sup>(9)</sup> When

Your time is alway ready.—They may go now as then. Of the nation, their thoughts and feelings are in sympathy with the national feasts. They can join in the festive throng keeping holiday, and take their part in the Temple service. For Him present events have another meaning. Desertion of disciples, threatenings of Jews, unbelief of brethren—all this means that the end is approaching, and that His time is at hand.

<sup>(7)</sup> The world cannot hate you.—Because they were of the world. To have hated them, would have been to have hated itself. (Comp. chap. iii. 19, 20.)

But me it hateth, because I testify . . .—He had placed Himself in a position of antagonism to it, and must necessarily do so. His words and acts must be a witness against the evil of its deeds. This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. But men who love darkness must also hate light. Its very presence makes the darkness visible; and nothing cuts to the very quick, like that which makes the heart condemn itself.

<sup>(8)</sup> Go ye up unto this feast—This should be, rather, *Go ye up unto the feast*, with the stress on the pronoun "ye," and the article instead of the demonstrative "this."

I go not up yet unto this feast.—The "yet" is of doubtful authority, though it is found

in some early MSS. and versions, and the more so because it removes an apparent difficulty. Without it, the words do not involve a change of purpose, and Porphyry's often-repeated charge of fickleness has no real ground. He is not going up unto the feast in the sense in which they intended—openly, with the usual caravan from Galilee. Another going up publicly, as they intended, and with an issue the dark presages of which now crowd upon Him, is present to His mind. "Ye, go ye up to the feast; I go not up to *this* feast." The verb is in the present, and its meaning does not exclude a going up afterwards. (See also Note on verse 10.) They were then going; the caravan was preparing to start. I am not going up (now). The time is coming, but it has not yet fully come. (Comp. Luke ix. 51.)

<sup>(9)</sup> He abode still in Galilee.—We find Him in Jerusalem between the 16th and 20th of Tishri (verse 14), and He could not therefore have remained behind them more than three or four days. We have no record of any companion with Him until chap. ix. 2; but it is probable that some at least of the Apostolic band remained with Him in Galilee and went with Him to Jerusalem. (Comp. Luke ix. 51.) If John returned to Jerusalem after the discourse at Capernaum (comp. *Introduction*, p. 4), we have an

he had said these words unto them, he abode *still* in Galilee.

<sup>(10)</sup> But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were

in secret. <sup>(11)</sup> Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? <sup>(12)</sup> And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good

explanation of the brevity with which he treats the period between Passover and Tabernacles.

<sup>(10)</sup> But when His brethren were gone up, then went He also up unto the feast.—The words “unto the feast” are misplaced in the received text, upon which our version is based. The right reading is, *But when His brethren were gone up unto the feast, then went He also up*; and the difference is not unimportant. We have seen that, even with the ordinary reading, there is no ground for the frequent objection (verse 8), but it is really nowhere said that He went up to the feast at all. As a matter of fact, the special feast day—the day of Holy Convocation—was on the 15th of Tishri, the 14th being the preparation day. From the 16th to the 20th was what was called “The Lesser Festival,” or “The Middle of the Feast” (verse 14), and it is at this we find Him present. (Comp. also verse 37.)

Not openly, but as it were in secret—*i.e.*, not with the usual company. Judging from His practice at another time (chap. iv. 4), He would go through Samaria, while the caravan would go on the eastern side of the Jordan.

<sup>(11)</sup> The Jews—*i.e.*, as before, and as in verses 13 and 15, the official representatives of the nation.

They kept seeking Him at the feast, where they naturally expected that He would be, and kept asking, without naming Him, Where is He? which is almost equivalent to, Where is this fellow? Their question points out that their hostility had gone as far as a definite plot against Him, and that the knowledge of this was widely spread.

<sup>(12)</sup> And there was much murmuring among the people.—The original word for “people” is here, and here only in St. John, in the plural, and is best rendered by *multitudes*. It refers to the throngs of people assembled during the various parts of the ritual of the feast, and, perhaps, especially on the one hand to the Galilean multitude, some of whom had been present at the last great work recorded in this Gospel, and some of whom had been present at other works, and influenced by other teaching of Jesus and the Apostles; and on the other hand, to the Judaean multitude, who had been prevented from accepting Him in the same degree by the stronger influence of the hierarchy. Among these multitudes there arose, as before among the Jews and among the disciples (chap. vi. 41 and 61), a murmuring; but the subject of this discussion is not His teaching,

man : others said, Nay ; but he deceiveth the people.

<sup>(13)</sup> Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

<sup>(14)</sup> Now about the midst

<sup>1</sup> Or,  
learning.

of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.

<sup>(15)</sup> And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters,<sup>1</sup> having never learned ? <sup>(16)</sup> Jesus an-

but His character. Their practical test-question was, Is He a good man, or a deceiver ? (Comp. Matt. xxvii. 63.) Some would think of deeds and words which established His goodness beyond all doubt ; but if He is a good man, then His claim cannot be false. Others would think of deceivers, who had led away the multitude before (comp. Acts v. 36, 37), and that He was one of them.

<sup>(13)</sup> No man cannot fairly be limited, as it generally has been, to the multitude who believed in Him. It discloses to us rather a reign of terror, in which opinion was stifled, and men dared not speak openly on either side until authority had determined what they should say.

<sup>(14)</sup> Now about the midst of the feast.—Better, *But now, when it was the middle of the feast.* (Comp. verse 8.) This was the technical *Chōl Mō'ēd* or *Mō'ēd Kātōn*, "the Middle of the Feast," or "the Lesser Feast." He had taken no part in the greater festival itself, and now He appears in the Temple, as far as we know, for the first time as a public teacher, probably (verse 19) as an expounder of some Scripture which had been read.

<sup>(15)</sup> How knoweth this man letters ?—Their spirit is seen in that at which they marvel. It is not the substance of His teaching that excites their attention, but the

fact that He who has never been technically trained as a Rabbi is acquainted with the literature of the schools. (See Acts xxvi. 24, "much learning," where "learning" represents the word here rendered "letters.") He is to them as a layman and unlearned (comp. Acts iv. 13), not known in the circles of the professional expounders — a demagogue, who deceived the multitude ; and they hear Him speaking with a learning and wisdom that excites their wonder, and unlocking mysteries of which they thought that they only possessed the key.

<sup>(16)</sup> My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.—The answer carries them once more to the words uttered by Him at the last feast at which He had been present. (Comp. chap. v. 19, 30). Then He had again and again referred to the Father who sent Him (verses 38, 39, 44, 57), and claimed as His own work the doing of the Father's will (verse 30). In the Capernaum synagogue, in the hearing of some of these Jews, He had declared that all who were taught of God, and heard and learned the lesson, would come to Him (chap. vi. 45). There is, then, no ground for their present wonder. The teaching which is His in relation to them, is not His of original source. He claims to be in His humanity as a messenger, carrying the message of Him that sent

swnered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. <sup>(17)</sup> If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of

God, or whether I speak of myself. <sup>(18)</sup> He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and

Him. He is the Word by whom the mind of God is spoken.

**Doctrine** represents a word which is frequently used in the Gospels, of our Lord, but only here and in the next verse by Him. It has acquired a definite and concrete meaning not found in the original, which is better rendered by *teaching* (compare, e.g., Mark iv. 2).

<sup>(17)</sup> **If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine.**—Better, *If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.* The stress is upon “willeth,” which in our version reads as if it were only the auxiliary verb. It is not deed which is the outcome of faith; but will, which precedes it, that is here spoken of. This human will to do the divine will is the condition of knowing it. The words are unlimited and far-reaching in their meaning. Those who heard them would naturally understand them, as it was intended they should, of the divine will expressed in the Law and the Prophets (verse 19); but they include the will of God revealed, more or less clearly, to all men and in all times. Our thoughts dwell naturally on representative lives such as those of Saul the Pharisee, Cornelius the centurion, Justin the philosopher; but the truth holds good for every honest heart in every walk of life. The “any man” of Christ’s

own words excludes none from its reach, and the voice of comfort and of hope is spoken alike to all in our ignorance, fears, doubts—that he who in very deed willeth to do God’s will, shall not fail to know, now or in the life to come, of the teaching, whether it be of God. (Comp. Notes on chaps. v. 44 *et seq.*, and vi. 29 and 45.)

<sup>(18)</sup> **He that speaketh of himself.**—Again the words repeat the thoughts of the earlier discourse. (See Notes on chap. v. 41—44.) They contrast His position and that of His hearers. Professional teachers, they sought glory one from another, and regarded their teaching as of themselves, the special honour of their caste. In the pride of their own knowledge they willed not the glory of God, and so had not the faculty to know and receive His teaching. He sought the will of Him that sent Him, and therefore was true, in harmony with the eternal will of God. The effect of the submission of His will to the Father’s and His seeking in word and work the Father’s glory, was that there was no possibility of unrighteousness in Him. This emphasis laid upon truth and righteousness has reference to the charges which they are plotting against Him, and which have already been expressed in the murmuring of the multitude (verse 12). The words are clearly to be ex-

no unrighteousness is in him. <sup>(19)</sup> Did not Moses give you the law, <sup>a</sup> and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? <sup>b</sup> <sup>(20)</sup> The people

<sup>a</sup> Ex. 24.  
<sup>b</sup> ch. 5.18.

answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? <sup>(21)</sup> Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.

plained with special reference to their position and His, but the general form of the expressions, "He that speaketh of himself . . ." "He that seeketh His glory . . ." show that this is not the exclusive reference. They, too, hold good of every man who speaketh of himself, and of every man who seeketh the glory of Him that sent Him.

<sup>(19)</sup> Did not Moses . . . ? —The note of interrogation should be placed at the end of the first clause. The verse would then read, *Did not Moses give you the Law? and none of you doeth the Law. Why seek ye to kill Me?* So far from the will to do God's will, without which they could not know His teaching, they had the Law, which they all professed to accept, and yet no one kept it (chap. v. 45—47). This thought follows naturally on verses 17 and 18, and, like the whole of this teaching, grows out of the truths of chap. v.; but it may be that this reference to Moses and the Law has a special fitness, as suggested by the feast. Moses had commanded that the Law should be read in every Sabbatical year at this very festival (Deut. xxxi. 10); and there is good reason for believing that the current year was a Sabbatical year. The first portion of the Law which i. was customary to read was Deut. i. 1—vi. 3. Within this section (verse 17) came the command,

"Thou shalt not kill." They were, then, in their persecution of Him (chap. v. 18), breaking the Law, of which their presence at the feast was a professed obedience.

<sup>(20)</sup> The people.—They know that the rulers have sought for Him (verse 11), but are not aware of their intention to kill Him. When this is referred to, it is "by some of them of Jerusalem" (see verse 25). These pilgrims know how far from their own thoughts is any such idea, and they think that its presence in His thoughts must be the work of a demon. (Comp. Note on Matt. xi. 18.) They utter this, not in hostility, but in wonder that He can think so.

<sup>(21)</sup> I have done one work.—i.e., the one conspicuous work of healing the infirm man on the Sabbath day, which He did at His last visit to Jerusalem. We have already had a reference to other works in chap. ii. 23, and He Himself refers to His many good works in chap. x. 23.

Ye all marvel.—This answer is addressed to the multitude who said "Thou hast a devil," when He spoke of the intention to kill Him. This work on the Sabbath day, which provoked the deadly hostility of the hierarchy (chap. v. 16, 18), was cause of wonder to them all. They, too, though not in the same degree, were led by it to take a hostile position.

(22) Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision ;<sup>a</sup> (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers ;<sup>b</sup>) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man. (23) If a

<sup>a</sup> Lev. 12.  
3.  
<sup>b</sup> Gen. 17.  
10.  
1 Or,  
without  
breaking  
the  
law of  
Moses.

man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken ;<sup>1</sup> are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every

(22) Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision. — Some MSS., and many editors, place the “therefore,” or *on this account*, at the close of the last verse, reading, “Ye all marvel on this account,” and then the present verse, “Moses gave unto you circumcision . . .” The reading of our version is, however, better supported, and agrees better with the writer’s style. “On this account hath Moses given you circumcision, not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers.” The argument is, “Ye circumcise on the Sabbath day because circumcision is part of the Mosaic law; but Moses gave you circumcision because he had an anterior and higher authority for it, and in practice you recognise this and make it override the Sabbath. But if circumcision is allowed, why not a deed of mercy ? This is the practice and precept of your rulers. But if a patriarchal rite is greater than the Mosaic Sabbath, because the fathers were anterior to Moses ; how much more an act of love, which is anterior to all time.”

A man.—Used here, and in the next verse, as equivalent to a male child, as in chap. xvi. 21.

(23) That the law of Moses should not be broken.—The text here is to be preferred to the marginal reading, though the latter has still the support of considerable

authority. In the one case, the law which may not be broken is the law directing circumcision on the eighth day. In the other, “without breaking the law of Moses” refers to the law of the Sabbath. The rule of circumcision on the eighth day (Gen. xvii. 12 ; xxi. 4) was adopted in the Mosaic law (Lev. xii. 3), and strictly adhered to—we have examples in the New Testament, in Luke i. 59, ii. 21, and Phil. iii. 5—and if the eighth day fell on the Sabbath, then, according to Rabbinic precept, “circumcision vacated the Sabbath.” The School of Hillel the Great—and disciples of this school were at the time of our Lord the chief teachers at Jerusalem (comp. Note on v. 39)—gave as a reason for this that the “Sabbath Law was one of the Negative and the Circumcision Law one of the Positive Precepts, and that the Positive destroys the Negative.” His appeal, then, is an example of His knowledge of their technical law, at which they wondered in verse 15. Indeed, the argument itself is an example of Hillel’s first great law of interpretation—“that the Major may be inferred from the Minor.” If circumcision be lawful on the Sabbath, much more is it lawful to restore the whole man. For other instances in which our Lord used this famous Canon of interpretation, comp. Matt. vii. 11 and x. 29—31.

whit whole on the sabbath day? <sup>(24)</sup> Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. <sup>(25)</sup> Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? <sup>(26)</sup> But, lo, he speak-

<sup>c</sup> Deut. i.  
16.

eth boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? <sup>(27)</sup> Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he

**(24) Judge not according to the appearance.**—He has put the case before them in its true light, and from their own point of view. There was another Positive Precept of Moses which these judges were forgetting, though it, too, formed part of the first section of the Law read at Tabernacles (Deut. i. 16, 17). (Comp. Note on verse 19.) Let them who profess to judge Him by the Law obey it, and form a just and honest opinion; and not be biassed by the appearance of a mere technicality. Even if His work did fall under the condemnation of what they held to be the letter of the Mosaic law (comp. Note on chap. v. 10), they knew perfectly well—and their own practice as to circumcision proved this—that it did so in appearance only.

**(25) Then said some of them of Jerusalem.**—These Jerusalemites are distinct from the multitude of verse 20, and are acquainted with the intention which seemed so impossible to the latter.

**(26) But, lo, he speaketh boldly.**—But they, too, have reason for wonder. They hear him speaking openly, and those who sought His death listen to Him without reply. Are they, then, convinced of the truth of His claim?

**Do the rulers know indeed . . . ?**—Read, *Have the rulers come to know indeed that this Man is the Christ?* The word “very” is omitted by the best MSS. The word “indeed” shows that the questioners think it impossible that the rulers can have recognised Him.

**(27) Howbeit we know this man.**—They at once supply a corrective answer to their own question. They know this Man whence He is. He is the carpenter’s son, and His mother, and brethren, and sisters, are well known (Matt. xiii. 55, 56). His brothers, indeed, are part of that multitude (verse 10). They know that the Messiah will be of the seed and town of David (verse 42); but they have no knowledge of an earthly home and earthly relations, and all their ideas are of a Being who will not be subject to the ordinary conditions of life, and whose immediate origin no man can know. God’s Anointed living among them as a man, with mother, and brothers, and sisters! This cannot be. What meant the coming in the clouds of heaven of Daniel’s vision (Dan. vii. 13), or the coming suddenly to the Temple of Malachi’s prophecy? (Mal. iii. 1.) Why did Isaiah tell of His being “Wonderful, Counsellor, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of

is. (28) Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me,

and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me

Peace?" (Isa. ix. 6.) In such thoughts they fulfilled another prophecy of the same Isaiah, which their own Rabbis interpreted of the Messiah, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isa. liii. 2).

(28) **Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught.**—The word rendered "cried," implies always an elevation of voice answering to the intensity of the speaker's feeling. (Comp. in this Gospel chaps. i. 15, vii. 37, xii. 44.) Here this feeling has been roused by another instance of their misapprehension, because they think of the outward appearance only, and therefore do not grasp the inner truth. They know whence He is; they had been taught that no man should know the Messiah's origin, and therefore they think He is not the Christ. And this technical reason, the meaning of which they have never fathomed, is enough to stifle every growing conviction, and to annul the force of all His words and all His works! St. John is impressed with the fact that it was in the very Temple itself, in the presence of the priests and rulers, in the act of public teaching, that He uttered these words, and he again notices this, though he has told us so before (verses 14 and 26).

**Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am.**—He takes up their objection in order to refute it. There is, indeed, a sense in

which it is true. Those features were well known alike to friend and foe. With minds glowing with the fire of love or of hate, they had gazed upon Him as He walked or taught, and His form had fixed itself on the memory. They knew about His earthly home and early life (verse 27), but all this was far short of the real knowledge of Him. It is but little that the events of the outer life tell of the true life and being even of a brother man. Little does a man know even his bosom friend; how infinitely far were they, with minds which did not even approach the true method of knowledge, from knowing Him whom no mind can fully comprehend!

**And I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true.**—Once again He asserts that He claims no position of independence. He is the first great Apostle (comp. Heb. iii. 1), but He is not self-commissioned. Had He not been the Christ, their objection that they knew His origin might have had force. But sent by Him who is the really existent One, and whom they knew not, His origin is unknown to them, and their technical test is fulfilled. In the fullest sense, they neither knew Him nor from whence He came.

For the meaning of the word "true," see Note on chap. i. 9. It is almost impossible to give the sense of the original except in a paraphrase. We must keep, therefore, the ordinary rendering, but bear in mind that it does not mean,

is true, whom ye know not.  
<sup>(29)</sup> But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me. <sup>(30)</sup> Then they sought to take him: but

no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. <sup>(31)</sup> And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ

"He that sent Me is truthful," but "He that sent Me is the ideally true One." "You talk of person, and of origin, of knowing Me, and from whence I came, but all this is knowledge of the senses, and in the region of the phenomenal world. Being is only truly known in relation to the Eternal Being. He that sent Me to manifest His Being in the world is the truly existent One. In Him is My true origin, and Him *ye* know not."

**(29) But I know him.**—In contrast with their ignorance is His own full knowledge, which belonged to One only. (See Note on chap. i. 18.) The pronoun "I" here, as "*ye*" immediately before, is emphatic.

**For I am from him, and he hath sent me.**—This knowledge is here based upon His oneness of essence, and upon His true mission. He knows God because He is from Him, and in union ever one with Him. He knows God because He is in His human nature the representative of the Divine to mankind.

**(30) Then they sought to take him.**—The tense is imperfect, marking the continuance of a series of efforts to take Him. The persons who thus sought to take Him are, of course, the members of the Sanhedrin. The people are mentioned in contrast in the next verse. For the present their efforts are confined to plots. No one attempts to use actual force.

**His hour was not yet come.**

This is the writer's explanation of the fact that they did not seek to take Him. Jesus had Himself used these words at the first sign at Cana of Galilee (chap. ii. 4), and again before going up to this very festival (verse 6). The beloved disciple has learnt the religious interpretation of history. That the hour was not yet come was not the immediate cause which influenced those who desired, but dared not, to lay hands upon Him. The next verse points out that there was a division in the multitude (comp. verses 43 and 44), and in the uncertainty of what the consequences may be, no one was bold enough to take the decisive step. But if not the immediate cause, the writer regards it as the primary cause. Looking back on the life of his Lord, from the old age of his own life, so full of eventful issues, he has learnt that every deed of that life, as every deed of every life, had its hour mapped out in the eternal counsels of God.

**(31) And many of the people believed on him.**—This verse shows an advance in their faith. In verse 12 we found "some" asserting that "He is a good man." Now "many" accept Him as the Messiah, for this is the force of the words, "believed on Him." (Comp. verse 5, and Note there.)

**When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?**—They believe that the

cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this *man* hath done?

(32) The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

<sup>a</sup> ch. 13.  
33.

(33) Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me.

(34) Ye shall seek me,<sup>a</sup> and shall not find me: and where I am, *whither* ye cannot come.

(35) Then said the Jews among them-

Christ has come, but express the common thought of Messianic miracles in a question which must have a negative answer. The Messiah who is expected is not expected to do greater miracles than these. The Messianic idea is therefore fulfilled, and He who has fulfilled it must be the very Christ.

(32) The Pharisees heard that the people murmured.—Or, more exactly, *the Pharisees heard the multitude murmuring*. In the second clause of the verse, the Authorised version follows the order of the Received text, but almost all the better MSS. read, “the chief priests and the Pharisees.” We have to think of the Pharisees as taking the first steps. They see that faith in Him is spreading among the multitude, and that there is no time to be lost. They hastily call together the Sanhedrin, and the chief priests, who were for the most part Sadducees, join with them in an official resolve to take Him by force.

(33) Then said Jesus unto them.—It should rather be, *Therefore said Jesus*. He said this because they sent to take Him. The better MSS. omit “unto them,” and it is clear, from verse 35, that the words are addressed to the hierarchy generally.

**Yet a little while am I with you.**—Their action is the first attempt to take Him by force. It brings to His mind the thought that the end is at hand. But a little while more, and the hour will have come. The manifestation of God’s love to man will then be completed in its crowning sacrifice, and when the work of His mission is completed, He will return to Him that sent Him.

(34) **Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me.**—These words are to be interpreted in connection with chap. viii. 21, where they are repeated, and with chap. xiii. 33, where they are quoted and applied to the disciples. This will exclude any special reference, such as to the destruction of Jerusalem and to the seeking Him in the miseries which should follow, which most expositors have found here. The words refer rather to the more general truth now present to His mind, and applicable to all alike; that the time was at hand when He would return to the Father, and His bodily presence would be unapproachable, alike by those who should seek in hatred, or those who should seek in love.

(35) **Whither will he go that we shall not find him?**—He had said in verse 33, “I go unto

selves, Whither will he go, |<sup>1</sup> or, Greeks. | will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles,<sup>1</sup>

Him that sent Me," and in verse 28 He had declared that they knew not Him that sent Him. There is, then, no contradiction between these verses, and their question, strange as it seems, is but another instance of their total want of power to read any meaning which does not lie upon the surface. He is going away, and they will not be able to find Him; and they can only think of distant lands where other Jews had gone, as of Babylon, or of Egypt, or of Greece. Will He join some distant colony of Jews where they cannot follow Him? They have no thought of His death and return to His Father's home.

**Will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?**—Better, *Will He go unto the dispersion among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?* The word for "dispersion" (*διασπορά, diaspora*) occurs again, in the New Testament, only in the opening verses of the Epistle of St. James and of the First Epistle of St. Peter, and is in both these passages represented by the English word "scattered." The only other instance of its occurrence in the Bible is in the Greek version (LXX.) of Ps. cxlvii. 2. (In Authorised version, cxlvii. 2, "He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.") It is also found in 2 Macc. i. 27, "Gather those together that are scattered from us." (Comp. Jos. Wars, vii. 3, § 3; Ant. xii. 1—3; xv. 3, § 1.) The abstract word is used like "the circumcision," e.g., as a comprehensive title for the individuals included in

it. These were the Jews who did not dwell within the limits of the Holy Land, but spreading from the three chief centres, Babylonia, Egypt, and Syria, were found in every part of the civilised world. The Babylonian Diaspora owed its origin to the vast number of exiles who preferred to remain in the positions they had acquired for themselves in their new homes, and did not return to Palestine after the Captivity. They were by far the greater part of the nation, and were scattered through the whole extent of the Persian empire. Of the origin of the Egyptian Diaspora, we find traces in the Old Testament, as in Jer. xli. 17, and xlii. 18. Their numbers were greatly increased under Alexander the Great and his successors, so that they extended over the whole country (Jos. Ant. xvi. 7, § 2). Much less numerous than their brethren of Babylonia, and regarded as less pure in descent, they have, through their contact with Western thought and the Greek language, left a deeper and wider influence on after ages. To them we owe the LXX. translation of the Old Testament Scriptures, and the Alexandrian school of Jewish philosophers, two of the most important influences which first prepared the way for, and afterwards moulded the forms of, Christianity. The Syrian Diaspora is traced by Josephus (Ant. vii. 3, § 1) to the conquests of Seleucus Nicator (B.C. 300). Under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, they spread over a wider area, including the whole of Asia Minor, and thence to

and teach the Gentiles?

|<sup>(36)</sup> What manner of saying

the islands and mainland of Greece. It was less numerous than either that of Babylonia or that of Egypt, but the synagogues of this Diaspora formed the connecting-links between the older and the newer revelation, and were the first buildings in which Jesus was preached as the Messiah.

But though thus scattered abroad, the Jews of the Diaspora regarded Jerusalem as the common religious centre, and maintained a close communion with the spiritual authorities who dwelt there. They sent liberal offerings to the Temple, and were represented by numerous synagogues in the city, and flocked in large numbers to the chief festivals. (Comp. Acts ii. 9–11.) The Diaspora, then, was a network of Judaism, spreading to every place of intellectual or commercial importance, and linking it to Jerusalem, and a means by which the teaching of the Old Testament was made familiarly known, even in the cities of the Gentiles. "Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day" (Acts xv. 21).

Such was the dispersion among the Gentiles of which these rulers of the Jews speak. They ask the question in evident scorn. "Will this Rabbi, leaving Jerusalem, the centre of light and learning, go to those who dwell among the heathen, and become a teacher of the very heathen themselves?" We feel that there is some fact which gives point to their question, and is not apparent in the narrative. We shall find this, it may be, if we remember that He Himself had

before this crossed the limits of the Holy Land, and had given words to teach and power to save, in the case of the Greek woman who was a Syro-Phœnician by nation. (Comp. Matt. xv. 21–28; Mark vii. 24–30.) More fully still do the words find their interpretation in the after history. They are, like the words of Caiaphas (chap. xi. 49–51), an unconscious prophecy, and may be taken as summing up in one sentence the method of procedure in the earliest mission-work of the church. The great high-roads of the Diaspora were those which the Apostles followed. Every apostolic church of the Gentiles may be said to have grown out of a synagogue of the Jews. There is a striking instance of the irony of history, in the fact that the very words of these Jews of Palestine are recorded in the Greek language, by a Jew of Palestine, presiding over a Christian church, in a Gentile city.

For "Gentiles," the margin reads "Greeks," and this is the more exact translation; but the almost constant New Testament use of the word is in distinction from Jews, and our translators felt rightly that this is better conveyed to the reader by the word "Gentiles." (Comp. Mark vii. 26 and Acts xi. 20.) We must be careful to avoid the not unfrequent mistake of rendering the word as though it were "Hellenists," which means a Græcised Jew. This is to miss the point of their scorn, which is in the idea of His teaching those outside the pale of Judaism.

<sup>(36)</sup> What manner of saying is this . . . ?—We get a better

is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come?

<sup>a Lev. 23. 36.</sup>

(37) In the last day, <sup>a</sup> that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him

sense by omitting the words in italics, and reading, "What saying is this . . . ?" Their scorn does not solve their difficulty, and gives place to wonder. They feel His words cannot mean what they have said. "What, then, do they mean? What is the force of His saying?"

(37) In the last day, that great day of the feast.—The question whether the seventh or the eighth day of the feast is intended here, is one of antiquarian rather than of practical interest. The words commanding the observance in Deut. xvi. 13, and Num. xxix. 12 mention only seven days; but this latter passage is followed in verse 35 by a reference to the solemn assembly on the eighth day. With this agree the words in Lev. xxiii. 35, 36, 39, and Neh. viii. 18. Later the eight days of the festival are certainly spoken of as in the Talmud, in 2 Macc. x. 6, and Jos. Ant. iii. 10, § 4. The best modern authorities are for the most part agreed that it was the eighth day, i.e., the 22nd of Tishri, that is here referred to. It was the "great day" as the octave of the feast, and the day of holy convocation.

**Jesus stood and cried.**—Comp. Note on verse 28. Here the vivid remembrance of the writer remembers the attitude as well as the voice.

If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.—These words were almost certainly

suggested by part of the ritual of the festival, which consisted in a solemn procession, with music and headed by a priest, that went on each morning from the Temple to the pool of Siloam, where the priest filled a golden vase with water and carried it to the Temple amid the joyful cries of the people. He then poured it out on the western side of the altar of burnt-offering; while another priest poured a drink-offering of wine, at the same time, on the eastern side of the altar, and the people during this act chanted the words of "the Hallel," Pss. cxiii.—cxviii. If we accept the eighth day as that referred to in this verse, then this ceremony was not repeated; but its very absence may have suggested the fuller declaration of the reality of which it was the representation. The current Rabbinical interpretation of the symbolism connected it with the gift of the latter rain, which was at this season; and also with the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Talmud says expressly, "Therefore is its name called the house of drawing, because from thence is drawn the Holy Spirit," as it is said, "with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Jer. Succa, v. 1). Thoughts like these would be connected with this ritual by the Jews and by Jesus Himself, and the exact form which His own thought takes is marked by the words, "If any man thirst." He stands there on the great day of

come unto me, and drink.

(38) He that believeth on

me, as the scripture hath said,<sup>a</sup> out of his belly shall

<sup>a</sup> Deut. 18.15.  
the feast, and around Him are men who for seven successive mornings have witnessed acts and uttered words telling, though they know it not, of the true satisfaction of spiritual thirst, and thinking of the descent of showers on the thirsty ground, and in some vague way of the Holy Spirit's presence. They are, as the woman of Samaria was, by the side of the true well. For every one who really knew his need, the source of living water was at hand. (Comp. Notes on chap. iv. 7 — 15.) That very Feast of Tabernacles, with its dwelling in tents, moreover, brought vividly to their minds the wilderness-life; and as in the past chapter the manna has formed the basis of His teaching about the Bread of Life, so here the striking of the rock and the streams gushing forth in the desert would be present to their minds. In the interpretation of one who was himself a Pharisee, and was taught in the schools of Jerusalem, "that rock was Christ" (1 Cor. x. 4).

(38) There can be little doubt that our English version rightly gives the meaning of the original here; though representatives of both the earliest and the latest schools of interpretation have tried so to read the verse as to avoid its difficulties. Some would attach the first clause to the preceding verse, reading, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me; and let him that believeth on Me drink." Others would have us think that the words, "as the Scripture hath said," belong to the clause before them, and not to that which

follows, making the sense, "He that believeth on Me according to the Scriptures, out of his belly (I say) shall flow rivers of living water." The reader of the English will, it is believed, feel, and the reader of the Greek will feel still more strongly, that these are attempts to avoid what it is hard to explain; and that while they miss the difficulty they also miss the meaning.

#### He that believeth on me

. . . —We have here an advance on the thought, "If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink." That represented the satisfaction of the individual mind. This teaches the fuller truth that every one in living communion with Christ becomes himself the centre of spiritual influence. There is in him a power of life which, when quickened by faith, flows forth as a river, carrying life and refreshment to others. No spirit grasps a great truth which satisfies its own yearnings as the waters of the fountain slake physical thirst, without longing to send it forth to others who are seeking what he himself had sought. There is in him a river, whose waters no barrier can confine. This is the spirit of the prophet and the evangelist, of the martyr and the missionary. It is the spirit of every great teacher. It is the link which binds men together and makes the life of every Christian approach the life of Christ, for he lives not for himself but for the world.

The exact words "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living

flow rivers of living water.  
 (39) (But this spake he of the Spirit,<sup>a</sup> which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

<sup>a</sup> Isa. 44: 3; Joel 2: 28.

(40) Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet.

(41) Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of

water," are not found in any part of the Canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament, and yet Christ Himself utters them with the formula of quotation. This will be a difficulty only to those who value letter and syllable above spirit and substance. It may be that the words which our Lord actually utters in the current language of Jerusalem were nearer to the very words of some passage in the Old Testament than they seem to be in the Greek form in which St. John has preserved them to us. But it is instructive that the thought is that which our Lord Himself, or St. John as representing Him, considers as the essence of the quotation. The thought meets us again and again in the Old Testament. See the following passages: Ex. xvii. 6; Num. xx. 11; Ps. cxiv. 8; Isa. xliv. 3; lv. 1; lviii. 11; Joel ii. 28—32; Ezek. xlvi. 1, 12; Zech. xiii. 1; xiv. 8.

This frequent reference to the refreshment and life-giving power of water is the more natural in the East, where drought is a fearful evil ever to be guarded against, and a well of water a blessing always sought for as the first necessity of life.

The abundance is suggested by the contrast between the small quantity poured out in the Temple and the streams which flowed from

the rock struck in the wilderness. The vessel they carried contained but three logs (*i.e.*, about a quart), of water, brought from the tank of Siloam. This was poured through a perforated silver bowl. In the spiritual interpretation the water shall not be carried to the Temple, for every believer shall be a temple of the Holy Ghost and a source of life; it shall not be a limited quantity in vessels of gold and silver, but shall be as rivers bursting forth in their strength and fulness.

(39) The word "given" is omitted in nearly all MSS. except the Vatican. "Holy" before Ghost is also probably an insertion, though it is found in some of the oldest MSS. and versions. These are additions of copyists who were anxious to preserve from all possibility of misinterpretation the doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit. This doctrine is more fully expounded in chaps. xiv.—xvi., where see Notes.

(40) Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying . . . —The reading of the best MSS. is, "Some of the people therefore, when they heard these sayings."

Of a truth this is the prophet—*i.e.*, the Prophet foretold by Moses in Deut. xviii. 15. (Comp. Notes on chaps. i. 21 and vi. 14.)

(41) Others said, This is the

Galilee? <sup>(42)</sup> Hath not the scripture said,<sup>a</sup> That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 2.5.

Bethlehem, where David was? <sup>(43)</sup> So there was a division among the people because of him. <sup>(44)</sup> And

**Christ.**—The Messiah is distinguished from the Prophet in the words of the multitude there, as in the question of the legates of the Sanhedrin, chap. i. 20, 21.

**Shall Christ come out of Galilee?**—The answer “No” is expected, and the tense is present. *Surely the Messiah cometh not out of Galilee?*

**(42) Hath not the scripture said . . .**—Comp. the prophecies in Mic. v. 1; Isa. xi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5.

**Where David was.**—Comp. the history in 1 Sam. xvi.

It has often been asked, sometimes in the spirit of objection, sometimes in the spirit of inquiry, how the Apostle, if he really knew the history of our Lord’s birth at Bethlehem, could record these questions without a correction. But in these verses he is giving the feelings and opinions of the multitude; and it is a mark of the truthfulness of his narrative that he gives them just as they really occurred. He, remembering the events as they took place, can with perfect historic fitness record the passing thoughts and words, erroneous as they were. A writer of the second century could not possibly have unintentionally made so great a mistake with the earlier Gospels before him; nor could he have intentionally so thrown himself into the spirit of a Jewish multitude as to invent the question. (Comp. verse 52, and references in Note there.)

**(43) There was a division**

**among the people.**—The word for division is our word “schism.” It is found in the earlier Gospels in one instance only, “the rent is made worse” (Matt. ix. 16; Mark ii. 21). This is nearer to the older meaning of the word, which is used, for example, of the hoofs of animals, and the leaves of trees. St. John uses it only to mark this rent into two parties of the Jewish multitude, here and in chaps. ix. 16 and x. 19. In St. Paul it is used of the divisions of the Church at Corinth (1 Cor. i. 10; xi. 18; xii. 25). The use of the word in its ethical sense may belong in some special way to Ephesus, for only in writings from this city do we find it in Biblical Greek. Later, both the word and the fact denoted by it passed into the history of the Church.

**(44) And some of them would have taken him**—*i.e.*, those who asked “Doth the Christ, then, come out of Galilee?” (verse 41). The officers of the Sanhedrin were present all this time (verse 32), and are immediately mentioned as distinct from the “some” of this verse.

**No man laid hands on him.**—Comp. verse 30. The reason is not here repeated. The fact is in part explained by the existence of a section who received Him as the Prophet and as the Christ, and in part by the power of His presence and words, which impressed even the officers sent to take Him. (Comp. chap. xviii. 6.)

some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

(45) Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye

not brought him? (46) The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

(47) Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? (48) Have any of the rulers or of the

(45) Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees.—(Comp. Note on chap. xviii. 3.) They had been sent (verse 32), not with a definite warrant to bring Him by force, but to watch their opportunity, and seize any pretext for doing so which may arise. “The chief priests and Pharisees” are the Sanhedrin who met (verse 32), and, though it was a festival, seemed to have continued in session, expecting the return of their servants.

**Why have ye not brought him?**—Their question shows the object of the mission. It is asked in the bitterness of disappointed craft. In the presence of the multitude they dared not proceed by open force, and the influence they feared was every hour gaining ground. If their officers could have brought Him on some technical charge away from the people and into their own chamber, all would then have been in their own hands.

(46) **Never man spake like this man.**—Some of the oldest MSS., including the Vatican, have a shorter text, “Never man spake thus”; but the longer reading is to be preferred. The very officers acknowledged His power, and tell the professed teachers, whose opinions and words were the rule of all Jewish life, that never man spake as He whom they sought to

take! It is probable that in the section immediately preceding (verses 32—34), St. John gives us only a *résumé* of what Jesus had said, and that words which have not come down to us were among those which produced so profound an impression on the officers.

(47) **Are ye also deceived?**—The emphasis is upon the *ye*. “Ye whose duty it is simply to obey, who were sent to bring Him captive before us—do ye also yield to His power?” It is the Pharisees who ask this, and their spirit is shown in the matter of their question. They make no inquiry as to what He had said, though it must have struck them as a phenomenon demanding explanation that their own officials had been convinced by His teaching. It is at once assumed that they, too, had been *deceived*. It is this sect of the Pharisees who speak of Him as “that *deceiver*” (Matt. xxvii. 63).

(48) **The rulers** were the Sanhedrin, among whose official duties it was to prevent the introduction of false doctrines. (Comp. Note on i. 19.) “The Pharisees” were the orthodox party of the day, and they are the persons who ask the question. The matter was to be decided by authority, and not by truth. In the pride of the certainty that no one in a position of power or authority had believed on Jesus,

Pharisees believed on him? <sup>a</sup> ch. 3. 2.  
<sup>(49)</sup> But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed. <sup>(50)</sup> Nicodemus saith

<sup>b</sup> Deut. 17, 8,  
&c., and 19,  
15.

unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night,<sup>a</sup> being one of them,) <sup>(51)</sup> Doth our law judge any man,<sup>b</sup>

they ask the scornful question, "Hath any one of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed?" They are stung to the very heart at seeing first the multitude, then their own officials, going after Him. They know not that there is one sitting in their midst, both ruler and Pharisee, who long before had listened to the teaching of the Galilæan, and was in heart, if not in name, a disciple (chap. iii.), and that during this very feast many of the chief Jews will believe on Him (chap. viii. 30, 31).

<sup>(49)</sup> But this people who knoweth not the law . . .—The words express "Those people there, among whom you have been, and with whose opinion you have been coinciding, instead of holding the authoritative opinion which we have declared, and which we alone can declare. We are the interpreters of the law, and have the key of knowledge. That ignorant rabble uninstructed in the Law are cursed."

**Are cursed.**—The writings of the Rabbis are full of scorn and contempt for the untutored multitude, whom they called *am hāāretz*, "people of the earth," as opposed to those instructed in the Law, whom they called *am kōdsh*, "holy people." These words are an expression of this contempt. Some have supposed that they are meant to express the ban of excommunication, which they use as a weapon of compulsion in chap. ix. 22, but this is quite out of the

question as applied here to the multitude.

<sup>(50)</sup> On the character of Nicodemus, see Notes on chap. iii. His position here is that of a friend of Jesus, who still does not dare to declare himself His open follower.

**He that came to Jesus by night.**—Comp. Note on iii. 2. The better reading here is, probably, *he that came to Him before*.

**Being one of them** contains the answer to their question, "Hath any one (as above) of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?" (verse 48).

<sup>(51)</sup> Doth our law judge any man?—He identifies Himself with them. He, like they, is an expounder of the Law. The force of the question is in the word "Law," which they had used but the moment before in their scorn for the people who knew not the Law. "Well, this Law, which we do know and understand, doth it judge without open investigation?" Did they in their blind zeal forget such passages as Ex. xxiii. 1; Deut. i. 16, 17; xix. 15? They had determined a death, and were seeking to carry their sentence into effect in direct contravention of the Law. This holy people, instructed in the Law—they were the Law-breakers.

**Before it hear him.**—The better reading is, *unless it hear first from him*.

**And know what he doeth**—i.e., know the deed for which he is tried.

before it hear him, and know what he doeth?  
 (52) They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search,

and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

(53) And every man went unto his own house.

(52) **Art thou also of Galilee?**—They seek to avoid his question, to which there could have been but one answer, by a counter-question expressing their surprise at the position he is taking: “Surely thou art not also of Galilee?” “Thou art not His countryman, as many of this multitude are?” They imply that Nicodemus could not have asked a question which claimed for Jesus the simple justice of the Law itself, without being, like Him, a Galilean.

**Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.**

—The words mean, “Search the records, examine, scrutinise the authorities.” (Comp. chap. v. 39.) They seek to pass from the matter of fact immediately before them to the question of authority. Their generalisation includes an historical error which cannot be explained away. Jonah is described in 2 Kings xiv. 25 as of Gath-hepher, which was a town of Zebulun, in Lower Galilee. Possibly Elkosh, the birthplace of Nahum, was also in Galilee, and Hosea was certainly a prophet of the Northern Kingdom, though not necessarily of Galilee. Adverse criticism would lay this error also to the charge of the Evangelist. (Comp. Notes on verse 42, and chaps. i. 45 and viii. 33.) But the obvious explanation is, that the Sanhedrin, in their zeal to press their foregone conclusion that Jesus is not a prophet,

are not bound by strict accuracy; and it is not unlikely that, in the general contempt of Judæans for Galilee, this assertion had become a by-word, especially with men with so little of the historical sense as the later Rabbis. As compared with Judæa, it was true that Galilee was not a country of prophets, and by-words of this kind often rest on imperfect generalisations. We have seen that of the great prophets of Christianity all were Galilæans. Judas Iscariot alone, of the Twelve Apostles, was probably a Judæan (Note on chap. vi. 71).

(53) The section which follows (chaps. vii. 53—viii. 11) is one of the most striking instances of an undoubted addition to the original text of the Gospel narratives. We shall find reason to believe that it belongs to the Apostolic age, and preserves to us the record of an incident in the life of our Lord, but that it has not come to us from the pen of St. John. (Comp. *Excursus B: Some Variations in the Text of St. John's Gospel*.) While, therefore, it is printed in the text here, our text being a reprint of the Authorised version, without addition or alteration, the reader will observe that it is an insertion which breaks the order of the discourse, and in working out the line of thought will bear this in mind.

**And every man went unto his own house.**—This is not to be taken, then, as marking the close

## CHAPTER VIII.—

A.D. 32.

<sup>(1)</sup> Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. <sup>(2)</sup> And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. <sup>(3)</sup> And the scribes and

<sup>a</sup> <sub>10</sub> <sup>Lev. 20.</sup>

Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, <sup>(4)</sup> they say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. <sup>(5)</sup> Now Moses in the law commanded us,<sup>a</sup> that

of the discussion in the Sanhedrin. It joins the inserted section with something which has preceded, but we have no means of judging what this was.

## VIII.

<sup>(1)</sup> It is an instructive example of the way in which the artificial division into chapters often mars the sense, that one verse of this section is found at the close of the last chapter, and the remainder in this.

**Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.**—The Mount of Olives is nowhere mentioned by St. John. In chap. xviii. 1 he describes the locality, but without this name (see Note there). His habit, moreover, in giving topographical details of Palestine is to explain them for his Greek readers. (See Note on chap. iv. 5).

<sup>(2)</sup> **And early in the morning he came again into the temple.**—This agrees with His custom during the week preceding the Crucifixion. (Comp. Luke xxi. 37, 38.) The words “and He sat down and taught them,” are not found in the Cambridge MS., which is the oldest authority for the section.

<sup>(3)</sup> **And the scribes and Pharisees . . .**—This is the common phrase of the earlier

Gospels, but “the scribes” are never named by St. John. His word to denote the hierarchy in their opposition to Christ is “the Jews.” (See Note on chap. i. 19.)

<sup>(4)</sup> The Cambridge MS. reads, “the priests say unto Him, tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him,” adding the word “priests,” and placing here the first words of the sixth verse of the Received text.

<sup>(5)</sup> **Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned.**—If we interpret the words strictly, the case they contemplate is not that referred to in Lev. xx. 10, and quoted here in the margin, but that of Deut. xxii. 23, 24, which was the only case for which stoning was specified as a punishment. It would be a case of rare occurrence, and perhaps for this very reason, one on which the opinions of later Rabbis were divided. Strangulation was regarded as the punishment intended when no other was specified; and in the Talmudic distinction in cases of this kind, stoning and strangulation are named as the respective punishments:—“Filia Israelitæ, si adultera cum nupta strangulanda; cum despontata tantum lapidanda. Filia Sacerdotis, si adultera cum nupta,

such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? <sup>(6)</sup> This they said, tempting him, that they might have to

accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them*

Iapidanda: cum desponsata tantum, comburenda (*Sanhedrin*, fol. 51, 2).

**But what sayest thou?**—The question is, like that about the tribute money (Matt. xxii. 17), a snare in which they hope to take Him, whatever answer He gives. If He answers that she should be stoned, this would excite the opposition of the multitude, for a lax state of morality had practically made the laws against unchastity a dead letter. The immorality of Rome had spread through the provinces of the empire, and although the Jews were less infected by it than others, the court of the Herods had introduced its worst forms, and Christ Himself speaks of them as “an evil and adulterous generation” (Matt. xii. 39. Comp. Jas. iv. 4). To have pronounced for a severe law against common forms of sin would have been to undermine popular support, and it is this only that the rulers had to fear. To have pronounced for capital punishment would moreover have brought Him into collision with the Roman government, which reserved to itself the power of life and death. (Comp. chaps. xviii. 31 and xix. 7.) Had He uttered a word in derogation of the majesty of the Roman empire, the charge of treason—in which case to be accused was practically to be condemned—would at once have been brought against Him. (Comp. Notes on chap. xix. 12, 15.) It is clearly the more severe view that the form of the question is intended

to draw forth. “Moses said, in express words, . . . ; what dost Thou say? You surely will not differ from Moses?” But if He had taken the laxer view, then this, like the Sabbath question, would have been a charge of breaking the Law. He would have been brought before the Sanhedrin as a false Messiah, for the true Messiah was to establish the Law.

(6) On the text, see Note on verse 4. The last words, in italics, which are an explanatory gloss, should also be omitted. The verse will then read, “But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground”—or, more exactly, *was writing on the ground*. It is the imperfect of the continued action, and it points to the narrator’s vivid remembrance of the scene. What precise meaning we are to attach to this action is, and must remain, uncertain. Any inquiry as to what He wrote is excluded by the fact that the narrative would certainly have recorded it had it been known; and though writing on sand was practised in the Rabbinic schools, this writing was on the pavement of the Temple (verse 2). We have to seek the meaning, then, in the symbolism of the action, remembering that the teaching by action and gesture, common everywhere, has always been specially common in the East; and of the many interpretations which may be given, that which seems upon the whole least liable to objection is, that He deprecated

*not.* <sup>(7)</sup> So when they continued asking him, he lifted

up himself, and said unto them, He that is without

the office of judge which they wished to impose on Him, and chose this method of intimating that He took no interest in what they were saying. The commentators tell us that this was a common method of signifying intentional disregard.

An alternative interpretation may be suggested. They had quoted the Law, and asked for His opinion. They were themselves the interpreters of the Law. He claimed no such office. (Comp. Luke xii. 14.) He stoops down and writes, and the action intimates that the Law of God was written on tables of stone, and its decrees were immutable. They, by their technical interpretation and tradition, were making it of none effect. He came to fulfil it. The majesty of duty is sinned against, by these refinements of casuistry. They are now daring to violate the sacredness of law, by making it the subject of a question by which they hope to encompass His death. The solemn silence, as He stooped down in that Temple and wrote upon its pavement, must have spoken in a power greater than that of words.

*(7) So when they continued asking him.*—He would have avoided their question, and continued, as is here implied, for some time in the action of writing; but they will now interrupt that action. It seems to them that He cannot avoid the snare in which they have placed Him, and that He is seeking the only escape in silence. But there is an answer of which they think not, and this He stands up to give.

**He that is without sin among you.**—The word rendered “without sin” is frequent in the classical writers, but is found in this place only in the New Testament. It takes here a special meaning from the context, and is to be understood of the class of sins of which her sin was an instance. (Comp. the word “sinner” as used in Luke vii. 37.) Of the immorality among the Jewish rulers, which gives force to these words, evidence is not wanting. Still the wider meaning is probably not excluded. They who ask this question about the Seventh Commandment were themselves breaking the Sixth and the Ninth. It is to be noted, in the application of this answer, that our Lord does not lay down sinlessness as the necessary condition of fitness for taking part in the punishment of guilt. This would be to nullify law, for there could be then no executive power. He is not speaking in a case brought before the appointed tribunal, but in a case where men assume to themselves the position of judges of another’s guilt. In the judge, while he wears the robe of justice, the individual man ceases to exist, and he becomes the representative of God; but these can now speak only as men, and condemn her only by the contrast of a higher purity. (Comp. Notes on chap x. 34 *et seq.*)

**Let him first cast a stone at her.**—The Received text and some MSS. (not including the Cambridge MS.) read “the stone,” the stone referred to in verse 5. “Let him first,” means “let him

sin among you," let him first cast a stone at her.

<sup>(8)</sup> And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. <sup>(9)</sup> And they which heard it, being convicted by *their own* conscience, went out one by one, be-

<sup>a</sup> Deut.  
17.7

ginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. <sup>(10)</sup> When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her,

first of you"; not "let him cast the first stone." This was the duty of the witnesses. (See marginal reference.) We must not take the words to express permission only; it is an imperative, expressing command.

**(8) And wrote on the ground.**—The Cambridge MS. inserts, "with His finger," as in verse 6. The repeated action repeats His determination to avoid the office of judge. He has answered them, and He leaves His answer to do its work. There is a law written in their hearts, and this, while He now writes on the ground, is convicting them.

There is a strange addition at the end of the verse in one of the older MSS. of this section, showing how men have tried to give a definite meaning to the action of writing. It reads, "and wrote on the ground the sin of each one of them."

<sup>(9)</sup> The readings of the texts here differ considerably, but without any essential difference of meaning. "Being convicted by their own conscience" is probably an addition made by some copyist to explain the meaning, which is quite clear without it.

**Beginning at the eldest.**—Literally, *beginning at the elders*; but our version gives the right

sense, and prevents the possible mistake of understanding the word to mean the elders of the people. So "the last" should probably be taken, not of the lowest in official rank, but of the last who went out.

**And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.**—The scribes and Pharisees had probably stood close to Him. The woman was at some little distance, naturally shrinking from their gaze; but there is a crowd of people, including the disciples, around her, for they are in the Temple, and before this interruption He was engaged in teaching the people (verse 2). Her accusers had "set her in the midst" (verse 2), where she now stands. The whole scene is pictured with the minute detail of an eye-witness, who remembers how the persons were grouped, how the accusers went out one after another, and then, how Jesus was left alone, apart from the crowd, but that the others were still present.

**(10) Where are those thine accusers?**—Here again the Cambridge MS. has a shorter reading—"Where are they?" "Hath no man condemned thee?" or, more exactly, *Did no man condemn thee?* The "man" is in contrast to "thine accusers" or "they." "Of

Woman, where are those  
thine accusers? hath no  
man condemned thee?

(11) She said, No man,  
Lord. And Jesus said  
unto her, Neither do I

all who brought the charge against  
thee, was there not one to condemn  
thee?" The question is put to her  
to lead to thoughts of her sin. He  
has spoken words which have carried  
a lesson to them: He has now a  
lesson for her.

(11) **She said, No man, Lord.**  
—She simply answers His question.  
There is no plea for forgiveness.  
There is no attempt at defence.  
We know not what passed in her  
heart; we know not what was  
written upon her countenance.  
We know not whether the word  
"Lord" was simply the "Sir"  
of courtesy, or whether it contained  
something of the reverence of  
worship. He knew all.

**Neither do I condemn  
thee: go, and sin no more.**—  
Or, more exactly, *and be no longer  
a sinner*. There is no expression  
of forgiveness or peace as we find  
in other cases. (Comp. Matt. ix.  
2; Luke vii. 48.) He does not  
condemn her, for "God sent not  
His Son into the world to condemn  
the world, but that the world  
through Him might be saved" (chap. iii. 17). His words must  
have come to her as words of mercy,  
in contrast to the angry words of  
those who dragged her before Him.  
He does not condemn her, and yet  
by these words she must have been  
condemned more truly than by any  
words of her accusers. He does not  
condemn *her*; and yet the very  
words which bid her go are the  
condemnation of her sin. (Comp.  
chap. v. 14.) As in the case of  
the woman of Samaria (chap. iv.),

there is something in the tone and  
manner of dealing with this woman  
which goes beyond all words; and  
as we read the narrative the heart  
completes the picture, and we feel  
it preserves for us a real incident  
in our Lord's ministry of mercy.  
It is a mark of truthfulness that  
the narrative tells us no more. It  
has not the completeness of an  
apocryphal story. We feel we  
should like to know more. She  
passed from His presence as her  
accusers had before. What came  
afterwards to her and to them?  
Did she, in obedience to the words  
now heard, go forth to a new life,  
rising through penitence and faith  
to pardon, peace, purity? Did  
they who shrink from His presence  
now, so learn His words as to come  
to that Presence again, seeking not  
judgment on others, but pardon for  
themselves? Over all the veil is  
drawn. We may not trace the  
history of lives known only to  
themselves and to God; but the  
lessons are patent, and remain to  
condemn every human judgment  
of another's sin; to condemn every  
sin in our own lives; to declare to  
every sinner the forgiveness which  
condemns not.

[2) JESUS IS TRUTH, LIGHT, AND  
LOVE (continued). \*

(b) *Jesus is Light* (chaps. viii.  
12—ix. 41).

(a) He declares Himself to  
be the Light, and ap-  
peals to the witness  
of the Father and of  
Himself verses 12—  
20).

condemn thee : go, and sin no more.

<sup>(12)</sup> Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I

<sup>(12)</sup> Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world.—Omitting the inserted section, this verse immediately follows chap. vii. 52, but the words mark an interval, after which the discourse is resumed. Jesus had ceased to speak, but now speaks “again”; and St. John remembers that the words were suggested by some incident which occurred. It was “then,” or *therefore*, that He found occasion to utter this truth, because the outer form in which He may clothe it was present to their minds. Once again we shall find this mould, in which the truth shapes itself, in the ritual of the Feast of Tabernacles. On the eve of the Lesser Festival (see Note on chap. vii. 14), and on each of the five nights which followed, there was an illumination in the court of the Temple to celebrate the “Rejoicing of the Water-Drawing.” Four large golden candelabra shed their light through the whole city. Then there was dancing and singing, and the music of instruments, which was continued through the night, until at daybreak the procession to the Pool of Siloam was formed. Once again, too, the ritual of the Feast of Tabernacles is a memorial of the wilderness life. As the water-drawing was bound up with thoughts of the water given in abundance to those dying of thirst, so this illumination was bound up with thoughts of the pillar of fire which was the guide of those who walked in darkness. And in this case, as in that, it is probably the absence of the incident on the

last day of the feast which gives special force to our Lord’s words. Since the teaching of the last chapter, there had been an interval of, it may be, several hours. We may naturally think that the shades of evening were now drawing on. He is standing in the Treasury near to the court of the women (Note on verse 20), where for the six nights last past there had been a great light, reminding those who could read its meaning of the greater light which illumined the footsteps of their fathers. On this night the light is not to shine; but the true Light, which was ever in the world, is now in His own Temple, speaking the words of light and life to His own people. There is a Light there whose rays are to illumine, not only the Temple, or Jerusalem, or Judæa, or the Dispersion, but the world.

**He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness.**—Strong and full of hope as these words are in the English rendering, the Greek is more emphatic still. The negative is in its strongest form, expressing “shall by no means,” “shall in no wise,” “walk in darkness.” The possibility is excluded from the thought. “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” If a man makes a false step in life, it is because he seeks other guides in his own thoughts or in subjection to the thoughts of other men. He that seeks to follow the true Light—to follow, not precede it; to follow always, not only when it coincides with his own will; to follow patiently and trustfully, step by step, wherever it may lead—cannot

am the light of the world:<sup>a</sup> he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

<sup>a</sup> ch. 1. 5  
& 9. 5.

(13) The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. (14) Jesus

walk in darkness, for he is never without the presence of the Light. Here, as so often, stress is laid on the certainty and universality of the divine love on the one side, and the action of the human will on the other. There can be no doubt, "shall by no means walk in darkness"; there can be no limit, "he that followeth"; there can be no halting, "he that followeth." The light ever points the way; it is he who day by day follows it who cannot miss the way. Perception of truth attends its practice. The true journey of this life is here presented as a constant activity; in vii. 37, the source of this action is found in a constant receptivity.

**But shall have the light of life.**—For the thought of "light" and "life" in contrast to "darkness" and "death," comp. Note on chap. i. 5. The sense of the present passage is that he who follows Christ, not only has a light which guides his feet, but that through participation in the Messianic life he actually possesses that light in himself. He is no more dead, but has eternal life. (Comp. chap. iii. 15.) He no more abides in darkness (chap. xii. 46), but the Light which lighteneth every man abideth in him.

This verse is one of the many instances in which our familiar knowledge of the words of Jesus, in some degree, takes from the impression they would leave on us if we heard them for the first time. There is in them the calm assertion

of conscious divinity, which in its very simplicity carries its own proof. It needed no formal proof, for He Himself knows it to be true; it needed no formal proof, for those who heard Him felt His words to be divine—"Never man spake like this Man." "He taught them as One having authority, and not as the scribes." (Comp. verse 28). The witness to the existence of natural light is the eye formed to receive its rays; the witness to the existence of the Light of the world is the eye of the spirit conscious of a night of darkness, which has passed into the brightness of the presence of the Sun of Righteousness.

(13) **Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.**—Better, *Thou bearest witness of Thyself; Thy witness is not true.* (Comp. Note on chap. v. 31.) The Authorised version here, by a change of word, renders the connection less obvious than it really is. The Pharisees, standing probably in the front of the crowd listening to Him, bring a technical objection to His statement, and one which He had Himself admitted the force of. "According to your own words," they mean, "what you now say is not valid." They stand in the light of day, but demand a formal proof that the Sun has risen.

(14) **Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true.**—For "record" read in each instance *witness*, as in verse 13. The pronoun is emphatic. "Even if I

answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself,<sup>a</sup> yet my record is true: for I know whence

a ch. 5.31.

I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.  
<sup>(15)</sup> Ye judge after the flesh;

do bear witness of Myself, yet My witness is true." He had before quoted their law of evidence (chap. v. 31), and showed that He fulfilled its canons. He is about to show this again (verses 17 and 18), but He claims first that in reality the law cannot apply to Him. They claim a human proof of that which transcends human knowledge. They claim the evidence of a witness, to a truth for which there could not possibly be a human witness.

**For I know whence I came, and whither I go.**—The requirement of two witnesses was based on the imperfection of individual knowledge, and the untrustworthiness of individual veracity. His evidence, as that of One who knew every circumstance affecting that of which He testified, was valid, for the perfection of His knowledge implied that He was divine. He and He only of all who have appeared in human form, knew the origin and issue of His life; He and He only knew the Father's home from which He came, and to which He was about to return. For the same words, "I go," or, *I go away*, as applied to His voluntary death, comp. chap. vii. 33.

**But ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.**—The Greek word for "cannot tell" is the same as that for "know" in the previous clause. For "and" most of the better MSS. read *or*. Making these corrections we have, *But ye know not whence I come, or whither I go.* The change of tense

is to be noted. Speaking of His own knowledge, He refers to the Incarnation in the historic past, "I came." Speaking of their continued ignorance, He refers to the coming as continuing in the present. Every renewed act and word was a coming to them from God. (See chap. iii. 31.) He knew, in the fulness of knowledge, the whence of past coming and the whither of future going. They knew neither the one nor the other. They do not even know His present mission. Once again His present teaching takes up words uttered before. They had said, "When the Christ cometh no man knoweth whence He is" (chap. vii. 27). He has, then, fulfilled their test. He had said, "Ye both know Me, and do know whence I am" (chap. vii. 28); but that knowledge was of the earthly life only, and He now speaks to them of heaven.

**(15) Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.**—The pronouns are placed in emphatic contrast. "You on your part . . . I for My part." We must beware of the common mistake of finding the origin of this thought of judgment in verses 10 and 11, which as we have seen do not belong to this context. It arises rather from verse 13. The statement of the Pharisees, "Thou art bearing witness concerning Thyself; Thy witness is not true," was a condemnatory judgment based upon appearances. (Comp. Note on chap. vii. 24.) They allowed these appearances to carry

I judge no man. <sup>(16)</sup> And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. <sup>(17)</sup> It is also

<sup>a</sup> Deut.  
17. 6;  
Matt  
18. 16

written in your law,<sup>a</sup> that the testimony of two men is true. <sup>(18)</sup> I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me

them away from a righteous judgment. They looked at the form of human flesh, and declared His witness false. Had they listened to the words He spoke, and judged according to their spiritual meaning, they would have heard the voice of the Messiah and have seen the Light of the world.

This thought of the Pharisees, in their ignorance judging that which they knew not, suggests by contrast the thought that He in perfect knowledge judges no one. (Comp. chap. iii. 17.)

<sup>(16)</sup> **And yet if I judge, my judgment is true.**—Though judgment was not the object of His mission, it was, as He had taught in chap. iii. 19 (see Note there), the result of the manifestation of the Light. But in the cases in which the result followed, the judgment was not according to the flesh, but was in accord with the essential truth. The better reading here is, probably, the deeper word for *ideally true*, which we have had before. (Comp. Note on chap. i. 9.)

**For I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.**—Comp. Note on chap. v. 30. Here, as there, He identifies every act of judgment with the eternal and unchangeable truth of the Father.

<sup>(17)</sup> **It is also written in your law.**—He now proceeds to show again that the technical requirement of the Law was satisfied by His witness. The term “*your law*” is material, as addressed to

those who were professed expounders of it and accused Him of being a transgressor of it. (Comp. the parallel reference to the Law in chaps. x. 34, xv. 25.) To assert that Jesus placed Himself in a position of antagonism to the Mosaic law is to forget the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 17); and to assert that the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel differs in this respect from the character as portrayed by the earlier Evangelists, is to forget the teaching of the last verse of chap. v., and, indeed, to miss the whole force of these very passages. He does not, indeed, say “*our law*,” as it was for them what it could not be for Him; but He mentions it to show in each case that He fulfilled it.

**That the testimony of two men is true.**—See Deut. xvii. 6 and xix. 15, and comp. Matt. xviii. 16 and Mark xiv. 55, 56. The words are here quoted freely, and “two men” is substituted for “two or three witnesses,” which we find in both the passages in Deuteronomy. This prepares the way for the full thought of the “witness,” in the next verse. The requirement of the Law would be satisfied with the evidence of two men: He has the witness of two Persons, but each is divine.

<sup>(18)</sup> **I am one that bear witness of myself.**—The Greek has no word to express the English “one.” It is more exactly, *I am He who beareth witness.* The

beareth witness of me.  
<sup>(19)</sup> Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father:

if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. <sup>(20)</sup> These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in

two-fold witness is (1) in His own individuality—I, who know whence I came and whither I go, testify of Myself to you who know neither; and (2) in the fact that the Father sent Him. He is the ambassador from the Father, accredited by the Father's works and the voice from heaven, and His word is official as well as personal.

The thought is closely connected with that of verse 16. His judgment is not individual judgment, because of the union with the Father. His witness is not only individual witness, but that of the Father also. The whole passage should be carefully compared with the close of chap. v.

<sup>(19)</sup> Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father?—The words seem to be asked in scorn. “ You speak of two witnesses. We accept you as one. Where is the other? He should be present before us if his evidence is to be accepted.” They must have known well from the earlier discourse that He claimed God as His Father, and the recurring phrase, “ the Father that sent Me,” must have now made this clear. We are not to read in these words, then, any reference to a father in the flesh, though this interpretation is that of many ancient and modern expositors. The question, moreover, is not, “ Who is Thy Father? ” but “ Where is Thy Father? ” The

question is asked in another spirit in chap. xiv. 8.

It may be that to their scorn is added the desire to draw from Him express words on which to base an accusation. They perhaps expect an answer such as “ My Father who is in heaven.” (Comp. the direct question in chap. x. 24, and the adjuration of the high priest, Matt. xxvii. 64.) But the time has not yet come. His answer contains no words which they could lay hold of as a technical ground for blasphemy.

**Ye neither know me, nor my Father.**—He traces their ignorance of the Father to its true cause, i.e., to their neglect of the only means by which God could be known. This thought has met us already in chap. i. 18 (see Note there), and will meet us again in chaps. xiv. 9 and xv. 3. Here the Pharisees think they know Him, and ask “ Where is Thy Father? ” The answer is, that if they really knew the witness of one, they would know the witness of both.

**(20) These words spake Jesus in the treasury.**—Comp. Mark xii. 41 and Luke xxi. 1. From these passages it is clear that the word “ treasury,” was applied to the brazen trumpet-shaped chests placed in the court of the women for the reception of alms. There were thirteen of them, and each bore an inscription showing to what purpose the alms placed in it would be devoted. Here the word

the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

(21) Then said Jesus again

unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot

is apparently used of the place itself in which the chests were deposited, or the preposition must be taken as including the immediate neighbourhood. This notice of place is interesting in many ways. The court of the women was one of the most public places in the Temple area. He taught, then, openly and fearlessly. The chamber in which the Sanhedrin held their session, was between the court of the women and that of the men. They had on that very day been assembled to take counsel against Him (vii. 45—52). This gives point to the words which follow, “and no man laid hands on Him, for His hour was not yet come.” The court of the women, moreover, was the spot where the great candelabra stood. (See Note on verse 12.)

[*(b) Jesus is Light (continued).*]

*'B)* His return to the Father misunderstood by the Jews and explained by Him (verses 21—29).]

(21) Then said Jesus again unto them.—The best MSS. omit the word “Jesus,” and read, *He said, therefore, again unto them.* The word “therefore” connects the discourse which follows with something which has gone before, probably with the fact that no man laid hands on Him, for His hour was not yet come. He is still free to address the multitude, and after an interval does so. This interval is marked by the

word, “again,” but is not necessarily more than a short break in the discourse. We shall find reason for believing (see Note on chap. ix. 14) that the whole of the teaching and work which is included between chaps. vii. 37 and x. 21 is probably to be placed on the last and great day of the feast. The persons addressed are the people assembled round Him in the Temple. Some of the officials take part in the discussion, for it is “the Jews” who reply in the next verse. We have to think, it may be, of men gathered together in small groups discussing what He had before said. Some are really inquiring with earnest hearts about Him. The rulers are trying to suppress the growing conviction of the multitude. There are thus two currents of thought and feeling. One is found in the honest hearts of the untutored multitude; they know little of argument, and dare not interpret the Scriptures for themselves, but in their rough-and-ready way they are grasping the truth; the heart of man is bowing before the presence of its God. The other is found in the priests and rulers to whom, as a holy and learned caste, the representatives of God to man and the interpreters of their Sacred Books, the people are in intellectual and moral bondage. They seek to bind with fetters, hearts that are finding their way to the truth. Some of these groups have moved on, it may be, and others have taken their place.

come. (22) Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself?

because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.

Seeing a new audience near Him, Jesus speaks to them again; for it is not probable that the words of verse 27 apply wholly to the same persons as those in verse 19.

**I go my way.**—The rendering is a little tinged by the following thought. The Greek word is the same as in verse 14, where it is rendered “I go,” There, as here, *I go away* is better. It was, let us again remind ourselves, the last day of the feast, and now its closing hours have come. That thronging multitude would be before the close of another day leaving Jerusalem to spread itself through all the extent of Palestine and the Dispersion. He also is going away. Many of them will never see Him again. Before another Feast of Tabernacles He will, in a deeper sense, be going away. They will seek Him but it will be too late. There is in all the discourse the solemn feeling that these are the last words for many who hear Him.

**Ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins.**—Comp. Notes on chap. vii. 34, 36. But here the result of the seeking and not finding is declared in the sadness of its fatal issue. “In your sins” is not quite exact, and is, perhaps, somewhat misleading. The Greek has the singular, not the plural, and should be rendered “in your sin.” It points out the state of sin, rather than actual transgressions. This latter thought is expressed where the words are repeated in verse 24.

(22) Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself?—They

see the deeper meaning of His words, and yet cannot see how that meaning is to be fulfilled. “He is going away, and He clearly refers to His death. But the issues of life are in the darkness of the future. Who can know the hour of His own departure? There is only one class of persons who can speak with certainty of thus going away, and these are persons who by their own act fix the limit of their own lives.”

**Because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.**—Comp. Note on chap. vii. 35. Then they had asked in scorn if He would go to the Dispersion and teach the heathen? If so, they certainly could not follow Him. Here there is the same scorn. If He intends to go to Hades, He will indeed be beyond their reach. They expect to go to Abraham’s bosom: between Him and them there will be the great gulf which no one can pass. (Comp. Luke xvi. 22—26.) Many expositors have seen here a reference to the deeper darkness which, in current Jewish belief, fell on the souls of those who had by their own act passed to the other world. This is supported by the speech of Josephus at Jotapata (*Wars*, iii. 8, § 5). Their words may imply, “If He is going to that depth, well may He say ‘Whither I go, ye cannot come.’” But if this meaning were expressed in their words, we should have expected some reference to it in the answer of our Lord; and if it be expressed at all it is in *their* words. It has no sanction in thought or word from Him.

(22) And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not

of this world. (24) I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am

(23) There is indeed a gulf which they cannot pass, but it is not that between souls in Abraham's bosom and souls in Hades. It is the gulf between heaven and earth. This He brings out in two pairs of antithetic clauses. (Comp. Note on chap. i. 3.) These clauses interpret each other, and no deeper meaning is to be given to the first pair than is borne by the second. We may arrange them in a pair of affirmatives and a pair of negatives—

"Ye are from beneath;" "ye are of this world."

"I am from above" (not from beneath); "I am not of this world."

We have thus the full Hebrew expression of one thought, and this is the thought which John the Baptist, from another point of view, taught his disciples in chap. iii. 31. They are by origin and nature of the earth. He was by origin and nature from heaven. Of the earth, their feelings and thoughts and life were of the earth, and, by devotion to things of the earth, they are destroying the spirit made in the image of God, which is within them, and the link between them and heaven. He is from heaven in origin, and is divine in nature. He has come to reveal the heavenly and the divine to the earthly and the human. In Him, and in Him only, can their spirits find deliverance from sin, and find the true life; for in Him, and in Him only, the divine and the human meet.

(24) I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins.—He now further explains what He meant by these words in verse 21. The words, as they are twice repeated in this verse, differ in two particulars from their earlier form. One is, that the singular substantive "sin" has given place to the plural "sins." He brings home to them the definite and known acts of sin which resulted from their sinful state. Another is, that the order of the words is changed. It is not so easy to preserve this in English; but we may read in verse 21, "*In your sin ye shall die,*" and here "*Ye shall die in your sins.*" The believing not is itself a state of sin. (Comp. chap. xvi. 9.) It is a separation from the only source of life, and is necessarily accompanied by death.

If ye believe not that I am he.—The word "He" is not found in the Greek text, and this is marked by the italics in English; but they have been thinking and speaking of the Messiah, though the name has not been mentioned since chap. vii. 42. It was the name ever first in their thoughts, and our version represents the generally received interpretation. It may, however, be doubted whether this interpretation gives to us the full meaning of the words "I am," as used in this absolute way by our Lord, and as recorded in this Gospel. Within this same chapter they meet us again in

he, ye shall die in your sins. <sup>(25)</sup> Then said they unto him, Who art thou?

And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the begin-

verses 28 and 58, and in the account of the arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane we find them repeated. (See Notes on chap. xviii. 5 *et seq.*) The words had a sacred history which told of the revelation of Jehovah to Moses (Ex. iii. 14). Uttered as they were by Him who had just claimed to be "from above" and to be "not of this world," and uttered as they were within the precincts of Jehovah's Temple, and in the presence of His priests and people, they may well have carried to their minds this deeper meaning, and have been intended as a declaration of His divine existence. The meaning then would be, "If ye believe not that I am, that in Me there is existence which is the life of all who receive it, ye must die in your sins."

<sup>(25)</sup> Then said they unto him, Who art thou? — They ask the question in the tone of scorn which they have already expressed in verse 22. The pronoun is the emphatic word: "Thou, who art thou?" and the phrase was in frequent use to express contempt. He had said, "I am;" but they do not understand the words to be a divine name. Long before this time the name formed from these words, and which is now usually, but wrongly, read "Jehovah," had been regarded as too sacred to be uttered. They appear to take the sentence as though it was incomplete, "I am . . .;" "Well, who art thou?" We have again, as in verse 19, to note the attempt to

draw from Him some definite statement which may be made the ground of a technical charge; but this He again avoids.

And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.

— Almost every word of this answer is in the Greek capable of more than one meaning, and the true interpretation of the whole sentence cannot be decided with certainty. To discuss it with any fulness would be to encumber the page with details which would be unintelligible to the general reader; to discuss it with anything but fulness would be unsatisfactory to the student. There is little room for addition to the investigations which are now accessible. The full notes of Meyer and Stier and Tholuck may be read in English; and Dr. Moulton's addition to his Translation of Winer's Grammar (eighth edition, 1877, pp. 581—2), gives in a few words nearly all that can be said on the grammatical difficulty. After a careful consideration of the whole matter, it is believed, though not without hesitation, that the rendering which is least liable to objection on any ground is that which regards the answer as itself a question—"What I from the beginning am also speaking to you?" "You ask who I am. This has formed the substance of My teaching from the beginning, and is the substance of My teaching still." (Comp. verse 58.) "Can it be that you ask this?"

ning. <sup>(26)</sup> I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.

<sup>(27)</sup> They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. <sup>(28)</sup> Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know

<sup>(26)</sup> I have many things to say and to judge of you.—The order of thought here is not certain, and will depend, in part, upon the interpretation we give to the previous verse. These words seem to arise from their judgment of Him as expressed in their scornful question, “Who art thou?” He has, indeed, immediately before (verse 23), spoken of them. He is about in this discourse to do so again. There are present to His mind now many things to say of them, and these, if said, would be in words of condemnation; but He refrains. There is present to His mind also the great work He had to do—to speak to the world the eternal truth of God.

**But he that sent me is true.**—The words express a marked contrast to the words and thoughts with which He would come in contact, if He said and judged concerning them. They refer to the calm repose of the divine life in heaven, as contrasted with the misunderstandings and objections with which the manifestation of that life on earth had been encompassed. He turns from them to the thought of Him who sent Him, and who is true.

**And I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.**—Better, *I speak unto the world the things which I heard from Him.* It is the truth brought into and announced in the

world, and which was heard during the pre-incarnate life with the Father. (Comp. verses 28 and 38.)

<sup>(27)</sup> They understood not that he spake (better, *was speaking*) to them of the Father.—We have seen in Note on verse 21 that a new discourse commences there, and that the hearers are not necessarily the same as those who had asked the question and heard the answer of verse 19. Still the speakers then, and those spoken of now, are “the Jews” (comp. verses 13 and 22); and they are probably in part identical with those of whom our Lord tells us there, that they knew neither Him nor the Father. Of these men St. John tells us now that they did not know that the Sender and the Father are one. The statement of their want of perception, which strikes us as so marvellous, is made just because it was marvellous. St. John remembers it many years afterwards, and remembers that on account of it Jesus proceeded to declare more fully, that every act He did was done in the Father, and that every word He spoke was taught by the Father, and that in every event of His life the Father was present.

<sup>(28)</sup> Then said Jesus unto them.—Better, *Therefore . . .* The teaching arises immediately out of the want of understanding just mentioned.

**When ye have lifted up the Son of man.**—Better, *When ye*

that I am *he*, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught

me, I speak these things.  
(<sup>29</sup>) And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath

*shall have lifted up . . .* (Comp. Notes on chaps. iii. 14, vi. 62, and xii. 32, 34.) Both the Crucifixion and Ascension are implied here. Now, for the first time, the hearers are marked out as the instruments of the Crucifixion (comp. Acts iii. 15), and therefore the means by which He will return to His Father's throne.

**Then shall ye know . . .**—These words confirm the view that the teaching of these verses arises immediately out of their present ignorance. Then the veil will be removed. Then the death of Christ will be followed by His glory. As we read these words they impress us with that calm of assured certainty with which they are uttered (comp. verse 12) before the events, and reminds us of the signal way in which they were fulfilled. (Comp., e.g., Matt. xxiii. 39 and Acts ii. 37.)

**That I am he.**—Comp. Note on verse 24.

**And that I do nothing of myself.**—This is dependent on “know that” in the previous clause; as is the remainder of the verse, and probably the first clause of the following verse also. They will then know that He is divine, and that the acts and words which they cannot now understand are part of the divine life in union with the Father. Now they marvel and ask, “How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?” (chap. vii. 15): then they shall know that according as the Father taught Him, He spake these things.

Now they cannot understand the witness of the Father (verse 19): then they shall know that He that sent Him was with Him.

**(29) The Father hath not left me alone.** The Greek words mean exactly, *the Father* (or, as the better MSS. read, without change of meaning, *He*) *left Me not alone*, and they are sometimes taken to refer to the time of His mission into the world. The context rather points to their application to every moment of life. He was ever conscious of a Presence which they knew not of, but which the future should reveal to them. We shall find Him resting in this consciousness again when He looks on to the dark hour when the disciples shall be scattered every man to his own, and He shall be left, as men would think, alone. (Comp. Note on chap. xvi. 32.)

**For I do always those things that please him.**—It would be less ambiguous to read, *because I do always . . .* The words furnish the reason for the presence of the Father in every act and moment of His life. All things done by Him at all times were in accordance with the Father's will. In His human nature perpetual communion is conditioned by perpetual obedience. The same thought recurs in His words to the disciples in chap. xv. 10. Comp. also, on the relation of the Son to the Father, Note on chap. v. 19.

Emphasis should be laid here upon the pronoun, “for *I* do

not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

(30) As he spake these

words, many believed on him. (31) Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye con-

always." It was true of His human nature, as distinct from all others, that no act, at any moment of life, had cast its shadow on the brightness of the vision of the Father's presence. Later in this same discourse (verse 46) He appeals to their knowledge of His holy life. Here, in words that none other in human form could ever utter, He appeals to His own consciousness of a life, every act of which was pleasing in the presence of God.

[*(b) Jesus is Light (continued).*]

(γ) True discipleship and freedom (verses 30—59).

Freedom by the Son's word (verses 30—36).

Natural and ethical sonship (verses 37—47).

Eternal life by the Son's word. The Son's eternity (verses 48—59).]

(30) Many believed on him.

—Wonder has often been expressed at the want of apprehension spoken of in verse 27. There is surely no less room for wonder in the faith spoken of here. Those who believe are of the rulers ("those Jews," verse 31). The words which they now heard (verses 28, 29) contain nothing of what we commonly call proof. They are an appeal to the future which should prove them true; and to His own consciousness of perfect obedience to the Father's will, and of unbroken realisation of the Father's presence. They are in-

deed, in part, words which men have since dwelt upon to prove that He who uttered them did not claim to be divine. It was not so with those who heard Him. They are watching for a technical assertion of His divinity, and do not hear it; but they are convinced by the power of His words that He is divine. (Comp. Note on chap. vii. 31.) These scribes and Pharisees feel, as their officers felt before, that "Never man spake like this Man." Where was priest or Rabbi who could appeal to the spotless purity of a life? There is the irresistible power of truth in the appeal which carries conviction to the heart. We have already found in the case of Nicodemus an example, probably not a solitary one, of a faith among the rulers which dared not confess itself. (See also chap. xii. 42.)

(31) Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him.

—Better, *to those Jews who had believed Him.* The act of faith is mentioned in the previous verse. They are here placed among the believers, with an expression of contrast mixed with, perhaps, something of wonder—Jews and yet believers.

If ye continue in my word.

—Or, If ye abide in My word. Comp. Note on chap. xv. 7, where we have the opposite form of the thought, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you." See also for this idea of abiding, Notes on chap. v. 37, 38. His word was the

tinue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed;  
<sup>(32)</sup> and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

expression of the eternal truth of God, and He therefore was the one great Teacher. Every other must sit as a disciple at His feet, and continue in daily learning and in daily living, to grasp the truth which, in that word and that word only, was revealed to man.

Here, as very frequently, part of the force of the sentence is expressed in the emphasis of the pronoun, "If *ye* continue in My word." "Ye, on your part, ye who now believe, but have not the courage to rank yourselves openly among My disciples."

**Then are ye my disciples indeed.**—The insertion of "then" does not improve the rendering—"If *ye* continue in My word, *ye* are My disciples indeed." The words imply that He who reads the heart has no confidence in this momentary conviction, which will not stand the test of true discipleship, and all that this includes. (Comp. Notes on chaps. ii. 23—25 and vi. 66.)

**(32) And ye shall know the truth.**—In the great Intercessory Prayer of chap. xvii., Jesus prays for His disciples: "Sanctify them in the truth: Thy word is truth" (verse 17). In the answer to the question of Thomas in chap. xiv., He declares, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (verse 6). It is this thought that is present, in the connection between continuance in His word and knowledge of the truth here. These Jews professed

**(33) They answered him,** We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made

to know the truth, and to be the official expounders of it. They had yet to learn that truth was not only a system, but also a power; not only something to be written or spoken, but also something to be felt and lived. If they abide in His word they will indeed be His disciples; living the life of truth, they will gain perception of truth. "Being true," they will "in love grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph. iv. 15).

**And the truth shall make you free.**—Here, as in chap. xvii. 17, truth and holiness are spoken of as correlative. The light of truth dispels the darkness in which lies the stronghold of evil. Sin is the bondage of the powers of the soul, and this bondage is willed because the soul does not see its fearful evil. When it perceives the truth, there comes to it a power which rouses it from its stupor, and strengthens it to break the fetters by which it has been bound. Freedom from the Roman rule was one of the national hopes bound up with Messiah's Advent. There is indeed a freedom from a more crushing foe than the legions of Rome. (Comp. Mark v. 9; Luke viii. 30.)

**(33) They answered him**—i.e., the Jews who had believed in Him (verse 31). There is no indication that this answer was made by others standing near, nor would this supposition have been made

free? <sup>(34)</sup> Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say

unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant

but for the difficulty of applying some of the words which follow (verses 40—44) to those who had ever professedly been believers; but the explanation is to be found in our Lord's own warning words in verse 31. He has tested their faith, and they fail in the first steps of discipleship.

**We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man.**—Their pride misinterprets His words, and expresses itself in a boast which passes the limits of historical truth. It had been promised to Abraham, "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies" (Gen. xxii. 17). This seed they were. This promise they interpret of national prosperity. Abraham's seed in bondage! the thought is impossible. As in other cases (comp. chap. vii. 52) they forget part of the facts of history, for they have never learned their lessons. The Egyptian slavery and Babylonian captivity are passed over. That very generation witnessed around them the insignia of Rome, paid taxes to Rome, used the coin of Rome, but it was the policy of the Empire to leave to the subject provinces a nominal freedom; and it may be that stress is laid on the words "been in bondage," which occur nowhere else in the Gospels. Those then living may have said with truth that they had never been in actual bondage, and the current expectation of the Messiah at that time may have led them to interpret the promise

made to Abraham specially of themselves.

**(34) Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.**—The Cambridge MS. and some of the Fathers omit the words "of sin"; but this is clearly to avoid the difficulty of the connection of thought, and they must be regarded as an integral part of the text.

**Committeth sin.**—The Greek word is a present participle, expressing the continuance of the deeds of sin. It means, not simply the committing individual sins, from which no man is free, but the state of the life which is sinful; the state which is opposed to doing the will of the Father, and is expressed in other words as "working iniquity" (Matt. vii. 21, 23). The truth is taught in the generality of a well-known maxim, but it has for them a special application. They claimed to be Abraham's seed, and therefore free. Let their lives decide the question of their freedom. He could appeal (verses 28, 29) to a perfect harmony with the divine will, and therefore had a perfect freedom. For many of them the voice of conscience must have spoken in terrible words, and must have revealed the chain which had bound them, hand and foot, in the slavery of sin.

**Is the servant of sin.**—The word means *bondservant*, or *slave*. It has been rendered by "bondman," and this brings out the connection of the word with that for "was in bondage," in the last verse.

It is striking that we have this

of sin.<sup>a</sup> (35) And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son

<sup>a</sup> Rom.  
6. 20;  
2 Pet.  
2. 19.

abideth ever. (36) If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free

same thought in the letters of both St. Paul and St. Peter. (See margin.)

(35) **And the servant abideth not.**—Better, *Now the bondman abideth not . . . ,* as in the last verse.

**The Son abideth ever.**—Better, *for ever*, as in the earlier clause. The Greek words are precisely the same. This contrast between the position of the slave, who is a chattel that may be bought or bartered or sold, and has no affinity with the members of the house, and no permanent right in it; and the son, in whose veins is the master's blood, and who is heir of all things, is obvious and general; but here, again, the present meaning is special. They claim to be the seed of Abraham. Did they remember the history of Isaac and Ishmael? The son of the freewoman abideth in the house; the son of the bondmaid is cast out. Here, once again, too, we have the pupil of Gamaliel taking up and expanding this thought, showing that it was within the range of current exposition. Read carefully Gal. iv. 19—31, remembering that the Epistle belongs to the middle of the half-century which separates the utterance of these words by Christ from their record by St. John.

The Greek word for "abideth" is the word which is rendered "continue" in verse 31, and the Authorised Version further obscures the connection by placing a paragraph division between these verses.

If we read again verses 31 and 32, noting the close connection between abiding, truth, and freedom; and the next verses, 35 and 36, noting the connection between abiding, the Son, and freedom, we shall have, it is believed, a simpler clue to the meaning than any of the usual explanations.

Our version misleads by the use of the capital. The word "Son," in this verse, should be read "son." The clause is the expression of a legal maxim holding good for all servants and for all sons, but here specially applied to the sonship in Abraham's household. It is not before the next verse that there is the transference of thought to the Son in the household of the Divine Father. In this verse the thought is that if they were really the children of Abraham they would be of Abraham's spiritual nature, abiding in his home, and inheriting the promises made to him. They had not continued in the spiritual freedom of sons, but had departed from the house, and had become, spiritually, bondmen.

(36) **If the Son therefore shall make you free.**—Now the thought of verses 31 and 32 is repeated in special reference to the position they had claimed for themselves. There is need for the emancipation of which He has spoken, and His mission in the world is to proclaim it. If they will enter into spiritual union with Him, and abide in this new spiritual relation, it will make them new creatures, freed from sin by the

indeed. <sup>(37)</sup> I know that ye are Abraham's seed;

but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no

power of truth. In the language of St. Paul, as quoted above, "Christ will be formed in them." They will become "members of Christ" and "children of God." The Son of the divine household will make them free, and in Him they will become members of the great family of God Himself. (Compare the same thought of the divine household as addressed by St. Paul specially to Gentiles, in Eph. ii. 11—22. See also in this Gospel, chap. xiv. 2, 3.)

**Ye shall be free indeed.—**

*Or, ye shall be free in reality.*—The word is not the same as that rendered "indeed" in verse 31. They claimed political freedom, but they were in reality the subjects of Rome. They claimed religious freedom, but they were in reality the slaves to the letter. They claimed moral freedom, but they were in reality the bondmen of sin. The freedom which the Son proclaimed was in reality freedom, for it was the freedom of their true life delivered from the thraldom of sin and brought into union with God. For the spirit of man, that in knowledge of the truth revealed through the Son can contemplate the Father and the eternal home, there is a real freedom that no power can restrain. All through this context the thoughts pass unhidden to the teaching of St. Paul, the great apostle of freedom. There could be no fuller illustration of the words than is furnished in his life. He, like St. Peter and St. John (Rom. i. 1, *e.g.*; 2 Pet. i. 1; Rev. i. 1), had learnt to regard himself as a "bondservant," but

it was of Christ, "whose service is perfect freedom." We feel, as we think of him in bonds before Agrippa, or a prisoner at Rome, that he is more truly free than governor or Cæsar before whom he stands, and more truly free than he himself was when he was armed with authority to bind men and women because they were Christians. The chains that bind the body cannot bind the spirit, whose chains have been loosed. He is free indeed, for the Son has made him free.

**(37) I know that ye are Abraham's seed.**—He uses the word which they had used in verse 33, acknowledging their merely physical descent from Abraham. He has since used the word "Son," but does not apply it to them. In verse 39 He refuses to acknowledge that they are Abraham's "children."

**But ye seek to kill me.**—The difficulty of understanding these words to refer to those who believed on Him (verses 30, 31), have led to the opinion that others of the hierarchy answer in verse 33. This seems unnatural, and is opposed to the words which immediately follow. As a party, they had been, and still were, seeking to kill Him. These believers, by their question in verse 33, were showing the spirit which declined discipleship, were identifying themselves with His opponents.

**Because my word hath no place in you.**—*Better, makes no progress in you,* "does not advance, does not gain ground in you." That meaning is established by

place in you. <sup>(38)</sup> I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen

with your father. <sup>(39)</sup> They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If

undoubted examples, and is in exact agreement with the thought of the context. In verse 31 the test was, "If ye abide in My word." Their question proves that their faith was momentary. The word had but penetrated the surface of their thoughts, but they had not so received it as to allow it to advance into the mind and influence their conduct.

**(38) I speak that which I have seen with my Father.**—Some of the older MSS. read "the" for "My," but without change of sense. For the thought, comp. verse 28, where we have the same connection between doing and speaking. He is the Word, and His work is to speak what He had seen in His eternal existence with the Father.

**And ye do that which ye have seen with your father.**—For "seen," the better reading is probably *heard*. Here, as in the previous clause, some MSS. omit the possessive pronoun with "father," but it is rightly inserted to express the meaning. The clauses are in direct opposition to each other, and this is shown by the emphatic personal pronouns—"I, on My part . . . My Father." "You, on your part . . . your father." The tenses of the verbs, too, are to be distinguished—"That which I have seen" (during My whole existence in eternity). "That which ye heard" (when ye became servants of sin). The cases of the substantives are also different—"I

have seen with my Father" (signifying existence with. Comp. chap. i. 1). "Ye heard from your father" (what he directed).

Again, there is a word in the original which it is hard to represent in English, and which our version altogether omits. It is not simply "and ye do," but "and ye therefore, or accordingly, do." It is the same principle of union between Father and Son which directs His work, which is to reveal God, and their work, of which the seeking to kill Him is an instance.

**(39) They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father.**—They feel the meaning which has not yet been expressed (comp. verse 44), and claim the descent from Abraham which He has already allowed (verse 37).

**If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.**—Almost all the better MSS. read "If ye are," for "If ye were." This must mean, "If ye are Abraham's children—but the supposition is excluded, for ye would do the works of Abraham, and this is opposed to fact." They are the physical seed of the patriarch, but they are not the ethical children, for the true child would bear the moral impress of the father which would be seen in his works. The thought of the previous verse is again present here.

The distinction between "seed" and "children" is another instance of an idea which meets us in this section, and was developed in the

ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. <sup>(40)</sup> But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have

heard of God: this did not Abraham. <sup>(41)</sup> Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.

writings of St. Paul. (Comp. Rom. ix. 7 *et seq.*)

<sup>(40)</sup> **But now ye seek to kill me**—i.e., As a matter of fact, in opposition to the conduct which would characterise the true children of Abraham, ye are seeking to kill Me. (Comp. Note on verse 37.)

**A man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard** (better, *which I heard*) **from God.**—The term “a man” expresses His revelation, by means of human form, of the divine truth which He heard in the pre-human state (verse 38). The crime of seeking to kill Him is aggravated by the fact that He was One who came to tell them truth, and that from God. They seek to destroy the human life, which for the sake of humanity He has assumed.

**This did not Abraham.**—It is usual to explain these words by a reference to Abraham's receptivity of the divine truth and messengers (see Gen. xii.; xv.; xviii.; xxii.); but they probably point to the whole course of the patriarchal life as directly opposed to the spirit of those who claim to be his children.

<sup>(41)</sup> **Ye do the deeds of your father.**—It is better to read *works* rather than “deeds,” as in verse 39. They did not the works of Abraham. They did the works of that father, who is now more clearly pointed out, but still not named. Before, when he was referred to (verse 38), they could answer that

Abraham was their father; but their works prove that they are not the true children of Abraham (verses 39, 40). They see that a spiritual father is intended, and they will claim God as their Father.

**We be not born of fornication.**—The meaning of this is to be found in the fact that the word became in the Old Testament prophets a frequent symbol for idolatry. (Comp. Isa. i. 21; Jer. ii. 20, and iii. 8, 9; Ezek. xvi.; Hos. i. 2 (especially), ii. 4, and v. 3.) They, as distinguished from the nations among whom they dwelt, had maintained a pure monotheism; and had never been idolaters, or children born of spiritual fornication.

**We have one Father, even God.**—“We” is strongly emphatic, expressing their pride in the theocracy, and their spiritual superiority to other nations. There may be in this pride also a touch of the scorn with which they asked, “Will He go unto the dispersion of the Gentiles?” (chap. vii. 35), or with which they call Him a Samaritan, as they do in this very discussion (verse 48). “Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt.” This is the historian's account of the spiritual paternity of the Samaritans, and these Jews may well

(42) Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

<sup>a</sup> 1 John  
S. 8.

(43) Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. (44) Ye are of your father the devil,<sup>a</sup> and the lusts of your father ye will

have felt their superiority in contrast with their neighbours. (See the whole passage in 2 Kings xvii. 26—41, especially verses 30, 31.)

(42) **If God were your Father, ye would love me.**—This follows because they would then be in a relationship of spiritual affinity to Him. God's children would bear the spiritual image of their Father, and would love Him who came from God; but they were seeking to kill Him (verse 40).

**I proceeded forth and came from God.**—Better, *am come, am here*. His presence with them was the result of His proceeding from God. As the Son of God He had eternal fellowship with the Father. The Incarnation was not the mission of one whose existence was separate from that of God, but it was the mission of the Son who proceeded from the Father. (Comp. chap. xvi. 27 *et seq.*)

**Neither came I of myself, but he sent me.**—Literally, *for not even of Myself am I come, but He sent me*; as opposed to the thought that His origin was distinct from the Father. His coming was not His own act, but was a mission from God to the world.

But if He is sent from God, if He is present with them from God, if He proceeded from the Father, it must be that all who are true children of God would recognise and love Him.

It is important to note here that

in our Lord's own words there is an assertion of the oneness of nature and of will with that of the Father, and yet the distinction of person is maintained. He is come from God, but He proceeded from the divine essence. He proceeded forth, and yet He was sent.

(43) **Why do ye not understand my speech? . . . my word.**—The distinction between "speech" (the form) and "word" (the matter which was spoken) is rightly preserved. Comp. chap. xii. 48, "the word that I have spoken." A good instance of the meaning of "speech" is found in Matt. xxvi. 73, "thy speech bewrayeth thee." From verse 33 onwards, they had constantly misunderstood His expressions. The reason is that the subject-matter of His discourse is altogether above them. He is speaking of spiritual things, which are spiritually discerned. They, if children of the Father whom they claimed, would recognise these spiritual truths and know the language of home.

**Ye cannot hear.**—Comp. Note on chap. vi. 60. The sense is, "Ye cannot hear, so as to receive and obey." He supplies the answer to His own question. In the following verses (44—47), He expresses this answer more fully.

(44) **Ye are of your father the devil.**—"Ye" is emphatic. "Ye who have claimed Abraham and God as your father. Ye are of

do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth,

because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his

the father, but that father is the devil." The possessive pronoun (*your*) is not expressed in the Greek, and the form of the sentence is one which would have required it if it were included in the sense. The father who has been referred to in verses 38 and 41 is now definitely named. The relation between father and son is maintained, but the father of the thoughts and acts of those to whom He speaks was not God, not Abraham, but the devil.

**And the lusts of your father ye will do.**—Better, *ye desire to do, ye will to do.* The verb is not an auxiliary, as it appears to be in our version, but expresses the determination of the will. (Comp. Notes on chaps. v. 40 and vii. 17.)

**He was a murderer from the beginning.**—Comp. Wisd. ii. 23, 24, "For God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of His own eternity. Nevertheless, through envy of the devil came death into the world, and they that do hold of his side do find it." So St. Paul, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin" (Rom. v. 12). The Fall was the murder of the human race; and it is in reference to this, of which the fratricide in the first family was a signal result, that the Tempter is called a murderer from the beginning (see Note on chap. i. 1). "Cain was of that wicked one, and slew his brother." (Comp. 1 John iii. 8—12, where the thought is expanded.) The reference to the murderer is suggested here by the fact that the

Jews had been seeking to kill our Lord (verse 40). They are true to the nature which their father had from the beginning.

**And abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.**—*Better, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.* The word is not that which we have before had in the sense of "abide" (see Note on chap. v. 38), and the tense of the verb is present in meaning. The words do not refer to the fall of the devil, which is here implied but not stated, but to his constant character. He has no place in the sphere of the truth; it is not the region of his action and outer life; and the result of this is that there is no truth in the sphere of his thought and inner life. Had he been true, he would have come to stand in the light and life of truth.

**When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own.**—This is in contrast to the work of Christ (verses 28, 40) and to the work of the Holy Spirit (Note on chap. xvi. 13). The Holy Spirit will not speak of Himself; He came to speak the truth which He heard from God. The devil speaketh a lie (comp. Gen. iii.), and this is of his own (see Matt. xii. 35).

**For he is a liar, and the father of it.**—*Better, and the father of the liar.* This is probably the meaning of the Greek, and it can only be expressed in English by the repetition of the substantive. The verse ends as it begins, by a reference to the Jews whom

own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.<sup>(45)</sup> And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.  
<sup>(46)</sup> Which of you convin-

<sup>a</sup> 1 John  
4. 6.

ceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?<sup>(47)</sup> He that is of God heareth God's words:<sup>a</sup> ye therefore

He is addressing. They were of the nature of him whose spiritual children they were. The murderous thoughts in their hearts, and their non-receptivity of truth, plainly indicated who their father was.

The reader will hardly, perhaps, need to be cautioned against the old heretical rendering of the first and last clauses of this verse, by "Ye are of the father of the devil . . . for he is a liar, and also his father." Still, as this view has been revived in some quarters in our own day, one word of reminder that it is no less opposed to the context and the teaching of this Gospel than it is to the whole tenor of Biblical truth and of rational theology, may not be misplaced. On the personality of the devil, which, if plain words have any meaning, is here implied in the words of Christ, see Matt. iv.

<sup>(45)</sup> **And because I tell you the truth.**—The pronoun is full of emphatic meaning. And I, as contrary to him, because I tell you the truth, as contrary to the lie which is his characteristic.

**Ye believe me not.**—i.e., ye believe not what I say. It does not mean, Ye believe not on Me, but Ye accept not the truth which I speak. There is something startling in this sharp opposition of truth and unbelief. To speak the truth is commonly to command belief. The mind of man is so constituted that truth is the first object of its search. Here was

perfect truth presented to men, and they refused to accept it, because it was the truth, and they were themselves children of him who was a liar.

<sup>(46)</sup> **Which of you convinceth me of sin?**—He appeals to their knowledge of His sinless life, as in verse 29 He asserted His own knowledge of entire conformity to His Father's will. It is an appeal that spotless purity alone could make, and is His own testimony uttered in the dignity of certain knowledge. (Comp. chap. xiv. 30.)

**If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?**—We may suppose that the last question was probably followed by a pause, during which any one might have answered the challenge. No one of all who had watched Him in Galilee and Judæa dared utter a syllable. Their silence is the seal to His own testimony. But if He is thought of by these as without sin, they cannot think of His words as untrue. They admit, then, that He speaks the truth, and yet they do not believe. On the absolute sinlessness of Christ, comp. 1 John iii. 5; 2 Cor. v. 21; 1 Pet. i. 19; ii. 22.

<sup>(47)</sup> **He that is of God heareth God's words.**—Again He answers the question which He has Himself asked, and gives more fully the same reason which He gave in verse 43. In verse 44 He asserted that they were of their

hear them not, because ye are not of God. <sup>(48)</sup> Then answered the Jews, and

said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

father the devil, and therefore lived to do the lusts of the devil. In the same way he who is of God does the will of God, and hears the words of God. The words of God are those which He has been speaking unto them (verse 26). Here, then, is the answer to the question, "Why do ye not believe Me?" Rabbis and priests, teachers of the Law, judges of truth, offerers of sacrifice, keepers of feasts, worshippers in synagogues and Temple—they were all this; but they were not "of God."

(48) **Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?**—The words imply that the saying was customary among the Pharisees. The knowledge of this, and the simple way in which the fact is told, is one of many instances of the writer's minute acquaintance with what was said and done by the leaders of the Jerusalem party. There is no instance given of the term "Samaritan" being applied to our Lord, but the term itself is frequently used by the Rabbis as one of opprobrium. The history of the fourth chapter is at once suggested to our minds, and was probably not absent from theirs. (Comp. Note on chap. vii. 35.) There may have been facts more immediately connected with this very Feast of Tabernacles present to their minds, which are unknown to us. The going up secretly, of chap. vii. 10, must almost certainly have been through Samaria. He had kept the last Passover in the

despised Galilee (chap. vi. 4). Had He kept Tabernacles in the hated Samaria? It is worth noting that the word Samaritan, in the singular, as applied to an individual, occurs but twice, except here and in chap. iv. One instance is in the parable spoken at no long interval after the present discourse (Luke x. 25—37). The other tells us that the only one of the ten lepers who turned back to glorify God "was a Samaritan" (Luke xvii. 16).

The rendering, "and hast a devil," is one which, probably, cannot now be improved. Wiclif's word here is "fiend," which in this sense is obsolete. But every reader of the Greek must feel how little our English word can represent the two distinct ideas, represented by two distinct words here and in verse 44. "Demon," used originally for the lower divinities, and not unfrequently for the gods, passed in the Scriptures, which taught the knowledge of the true God, into the sense of an evil spirit. Thus the word which could represent the attendant genius of Socrates came to express what we speak of as demoniacal possession, and the supposed power of witchcraft and sorcery. Socrates is made to say, "For this reason, therefore, rather than for any other, he calls them demons, because they were prudent and knowing" (*daēmones*, Plato, *Cratylus*, xxiii.). The history of Simon Magus reminds us that the people of Samaria, from the least to the greatest, had been for a long time

<sup>(49)</sup> Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. <sup>(50)</sup> And I

seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. <sup>(51)</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, If

under the influence of his sorceries (Acts viii. 9 *et seq.*), and it is probable that there is a special connection in the words here, "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon."

<sup>(49)</sup> Jesus answered, I have not a devil.—One of the disciples, who was probably present on this day, and heard these words, speaks of Christ our example "who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pet. ii. 23). The charge of being a Samaritan He passes over. His words soon after taught that a Samaritan may be more truly the child of God than priest or Levite is. The statement that He is possessed by an evil power from the spirit world He denies.

I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.—There is a connection between all His works and words and the unseen world. It is the union of Father and Son, and His life had been the constant honouring of the Father, whose will it was His meat to do (chap. iv. 34). Their works and words were as constantly—and this last calumny is an instance of it—dishonouring Him. The contrast suggests that this dishonour was not of Him only; but also of the Father whom He honoured, and whom they claimed as their God.

<sup>(50)</sup> And I seek not mine own glory.—The words are immediately connected with those

which have preceded. They dishonoured Him. This to one who sought his own glory would have been matter of concern. For Him whose whole life was one of self-denial, their dishonour finds nothing which it can wound. His words repeat what He had taught them before. (See Notes on chaps. v. 41 and vii. 18.)

There is one that seeketh and judgeth.—Comp. chap. v. 45. The thought here is that though He Himself seeks not His own glory, the Father seeketh for the honour of the Son, and judgeth between Him and those who dishonour Him. The result of the judgment as to those who keep not His word is expressed in the next verse; and as to Himself in chap. xvi. 10.

<sup>(51)</sup> If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.—Better, *If a man keep My word*. Our version obscures the close connection with the thought of "continuing in His word" in verse 31; and also that with "He that heareth My word," in chap. v. 24. This last passage is the key to the words before us. Here, as there, the thought of judgment and death leads to the opposite thought of coming not into judgment, but passing out of death into life. Here, as there, the believer is thought of as possessing the true spiritual life which cannot see death, but shall pass into the fuller spiritual life hereafter.

a man keep my saying,  
he shall never see death.  
<sup>(52)</sup> Then said the Jews  
unto him, Now we know  
that thou hast a devil.  
Abraham is dead, and the

Another interpretation of the phrase rendered "he shall never see death," is "he shall not see death for ever"—i.e., "he shall indeed die, but that death shall only be in this world, it shall not be in the world which is for ever." This is the thought in the collect in "The Order for the Burial of the Dead:" . . . "our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life; in whom whosoever believeth shall live, though he die; and whosoever liveth and believeth in him shall not die eternally."

The following are the only passages in St. John where exactly the same formula is used, and a comparison of them will make it clear that it means, as does the Hebrew formula on which it is based, that which we express by "never," or "certainly never," "by no means ever," for the negative is in its strongest form (chaps. iv. 14, verse 52 in this chap., x. 28, xi. 26, xiii. 8). The first and last of these passages refers to subjects ("shall never thirst," "shall never wash my feet"), which do not admit any possibility of doubt. The others are all parallel to the present text, in thought as well as in word. In all there is the fuller meaning that for the believer who now has spiritual life, and continues to live in communion with God, there cannot be death. "He shall never see death." What we think of as

prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. <sup>(53)</sup> Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the

death is but a sleep. (See Note on chap. xi. 11.) Death has been swallowed up of life, and physical death is thought of, in its true sense, as an entering into life.

<sup>(52)</sup> **Abraham is dead, and the prophets.**—They still "do not understand His speech," and take His words in a merely physical sense. In that sense they were impossible, for they are contradicted by the fact that death came to the great Patriarch and the prophets, and if to them, then surely, much more to ordinary men. They regard it as conclusive that their assertion in verse 48 is correct. No one, except a man under the influence of a demon, would make an assertion so opposed to the almost unbroken experience of mankind.

**If a man keep my saying.**—Better, *If a man keep My word*, as in last verse.

**He shall never taste of death.**—The expression is stronger than that which He had used, "shall never see death." They use it to put in the strongest way their wonder at the impossible promise which He had uttered. It has occurred before in Matt. xvi. 28. It occurs again in the New Testament only in Heb. ii. 9.

<sup>(53)</sup> **Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead?**—The question is exactly the same, with the substitution of "Abraham" for "Jacob," as that

prophets are dead : whom makest thou thyself ?

<sup>(54)</sup> Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing : it is my Father that honoureth me ; of

whom ye say, that he is your God : <sup>(55)</sup> yet ye have not known him ; but I know him : and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto

asked by the Samaritan woman in chap. iv. 12 (see Note). “ Surely thou art not greater than our father Abraham, who indeed died ? ”

**Whom makest thou thyself ?**—“ If Abraham, who received God’s covenant, himself died, and if the prophets, who uttered the oracles of God, themselves died, what kind of person dost Thou assert Thyself to be that Thy word shall deliver men from death ? ” The same phrase occurs again in chaps. v. 18 ; x. 33 ; xix. 7.

<sup>(54)</sup> **If I honour myself, my honour is nothing.**—The word rendered “ honour ” is not the same as that in verse 49. It is better to read *glorify* here. Following all the better MSS., the tense is past. We have then, *If I shall have glorified Myself, My glory is nothing.* Stress is to be laid upon the pronoun. “ If I, for My part, as distinct from the Father, shall have glorified *Myself*. ”

**It is my Father that honoureth me.**—Better, as before, . . . *glorifieth Me.* This is the answer to their question, “ Whom makest Thou Thyself ? ” The attribute of life in Himself, and the power to communicate this to those who keep His word, was the gift of the Father to the Son. (See Note on chap. v. 26.)

**Of whom ye say, that he is your God.**—Some of the better MSS., and most modern editors,

read . . . “ He is our God.” The identification of the Father with the God of Israel is important. It may be, as some have supposed, that the phrase, “ He is our God,” belonged to common liturgical forms or hymns, and was thus frequently on their lips.

<sup>(55)</sup> **Yet ye have not known him ; but I know him.**—The frequency of lip-assertion was not accompanied by any true heart-knowledge. The Father who glorified Him, was the God whom they professed to serve. Their question, “ Whom makest Thou Thyself ? ” has its explanation in the fact that this service was independent of any real knowledge of God. The two verbs “ know ” and “ known ” here do not represent the same Greek word. More exactly, the rendering should be, *And ye have not come to know Him : but I know Him.* The one clause expresses acquired recognition ; the other expresses immediate essential knowledge. (Comp. Note on chap. xiv. 7.)

**If I should say, I know him not.**—The thought of their want of perception of God has led to the assertion by contrast of His own full intuitive knowledge of God. To assert this knowledge is to make Himself greater than Abraham and the prophets ; but there is untruth in silence as well as in utterance, and His very truthfulness demands the assertion.

you: but I know him, and keep his saying. <sup>(56)</sup> Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw

it, and was glad. <sup>(57)</sup> Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen

**But I know him, and keep his saying.**—Or better, *His word*, as in verses 51, 52. Again the positive statement is made in the certainty of His full knowledge, and this is followed by a statement of the observance of the same condition of communion with the Father which He had made necessary for communion of the disciples with Himself.

**(56) Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day.**—They had asked in scorn if He were greater than their father Abraham (verse 53). His words have shown that He was. He now, with the thoughts of verse 39 still present, contrasts the exultation of him whom they claimed as father, when he saw from afar the Messianic advent, with their rejection of the Messiah who is actually among them. Abraham realised the fulness of the promises made to him, and believed in the Lord that the blessing should be fulfilled to his seed. He, too, had kept God's word, and in the true sense had not seen death (see Gen. xv. 1—6, and xxii. 18). The words, "My day," are used, as in Luke xvii. 22, for the manifestation of Christ on earth.

**And he saw it, and was glad.**—This is the historic fulfilment of the joy which looked forward to the day of Christ. Our Lord reveals here a truth of the unseen world that is beyond human knowledge or explanation. From that world Abraham was cognisant

of the fact of the Incarnation, and saw in it the accomplishment of the promise which had brought joy to shepherds watching their flocks, as the Patriarch had watched his; there came an angel, as angels had come to him, and a multitude of the heavenly host, exulting in the good news to men. In that joy Abraham had part. The truth comes as a ray of light across the abyss which separates the saints in heaven from saints on earth. As in the parable, where Lazarus is in Abraham's bosom, the rich man is represented as knowing and caring for his brethren on earth, so here the great Patriarch is spoken of as knowing and rejoicing in the fact of the Incarnation. The faculty of reason cannot explain how it is, but the faculty of faith can receive the truth that there is a "communion of saints," and finds in it a comfort which robs separation of its bitterness, and a power which strengthens all the motives to a holy and devoted life. (Comp. Luke xvi. 19—31; Heb. xii. 1.)

**(57) Thou art not yet fifty years old.**—There is no reason to doubt that we have the correct reading here, though some, from Chrysostom downward, have sought to avoid what seemed to them a difficulty, by substituting "forty" for "fifty." Others, and among them were the "Elders who in Asia conferred with John, the Lord's disciple," have held that our Lord was between forty and fifty years of age at the time of his public

Abraham? <sup>(58)</sup> Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. <sup>(59)</sup> Then took they up

stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

ministry. We know this from the testimony of Irenæus, who appears to have this very passage in his mind, for he says, "As the gospel and all the Elders witness" (Lib. ii. chap. xxii. § 5; Oxford Translation, p. 160). But "fifty years" was the period of full manhood (Num. iv. 3, 39; viii. 25). This is expressed in round numbers, and there is no care to be more exact in comparison with the two thousand years which had passed since the close of Abraham's earthly life. The thought is, "Thou art still a young man, and hast thou seen Abraham who died twenty centuries ago?"

<sup>(58)</sup> **Before Abraham was, I am.**—Better, *Before Abraham was born, I am.* (Comp. Note on chap. i. 6; and see another striking instance in Luke vi. 36, "Become ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful.") Here they ask in wonder, not unmixed with scorn, if He was coeval with Abraham. The answer is that Abraham, like all men, came into being. There was a time when he was not. But there was never a time when the Son of God was not. In the time before Abraham, in the eternity before time (chap. i. 1), He still was. No word which expresses becoming can be used of His existence. He is the I AM, present equally in the human "was," and "is," and "is to come."

<sup>(59)</sup> Then took they up stones to cast at him.—At

last the meaning of His words flashes upon them. They had heard this I AM before (verse 24) without perceiving that in it He applied to Himself the name Jehovah. Now there is no room for doubt. His own Divinity is the only explanation of what He has said; and it is in these words so plainly asserted, that those who had constantly misunderstood can misunderstand no more. The subtleties of later days, by which men have tried to show that there is no claim to Divinity here, were not suggested to their minds. They will not acknowledge the claim, but they feel that He has made it. They have heard the fearful words which seemed to them as blasphemy, and they take up the stones which are at hand for the rebuilding of the Temple, in which they are, to cast at the Lord of the Temple. (Comp. chap. x. 33.)

**Going through the midst of them, and so passed by.**—These words are omitted in a majority of the better MSS. They were probably inserted in others to explain what was taken to be the miraculous disappearance. (Comp. Luke iv. 30.) Here we are simply told that He "hid Himself and went out of the Temple, and this does not imply more than that He passed among the crowd which was around Him, out of the Temple, and thus avoided the stones which they had taken up to cast at Him.

## CHAPTER IX.—

A.D. 32.

<sup>(1)</sup> And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

<sup>(2)</sup> And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born

## IX.

[*(b) Jesus is Light (continued).*

(δ) Physical light given to the man born blind (chap. ix. 1—42): The miracle itself (verses 1—12).

The objections of the Pharisees, and the witness of the sufferer (verses 13—34).

Physical light and darkness; spiritual light and darkness (verses 35—41).]

<sup>(1)</sup> **And as Jesus passed by.**

—Better, *And as He was passing by.* The words are immediately connected with those of the preceding verse, “and went out of the Temple.” It was then, as He was leaving the Temple to escape the fury of His enemies who had taken up stones to cast at Him, and was passing by the place where the blind man was, that His eye fell upon him. The day was the Sabbath of the preceding discourse, now drawing to its close. (Comp. verses 4 and 14, and chap. viii. 12.) The place was probably some spot near the Temple, perhaps one of its gates. We know that beggars were placed near these gates to ask alms (Acts ii. 2), and this man was well known as one who sat and begged (verse 8).

**A man which was blind from his birth.**—The fact was well known, and was probably

publicly proclaimed by the man himself or his parents (verse 20) as an aggravation of his misery, and as a plea for the alms of passers-by. Of the six miracles connected with blindness which are recorded in the Gospels, this is the only case described as blindness from birth. In this lies its special characteristic, for “since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind” (verse 32).

**(2) Who did sin, this man, or his parents?**—The disciples noticed that He looked at the man, and it may be that He halted as He was walking by. Their attention is directed to the sufferer, and with suffering they connect the idea of sin. They ask a question which may have come to them many times before, and which has in various forms come to men’s hearts many times since. Some of them may have heard it discussed in Rabbinic schools, and may have wished to know what answer He, whom they had come to regard as greater than the Rabbis, would give. But it is a question not of the learned only, but of men generally; and those who now ask it do not propound it as a matter for discussion, but as a mystery of human life brought home to them in all its darkness, and for which they seek a solution at His hands. His teaching on the wider questions of the existence of evil and the connection of sin and suffering, though coming in the order of

blind? <sup>(3)</sup> Jesus answered, Neither hath this man

sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God

events after these words, and in part probably arising out of them, has in the order of the record occurred before them. (Comp. Luke xiii. 1—5.) What is special to the question, as it meets us here, is that what is deemed to be the punishment had come with birth—before possibility of thought or action, and therefore, as we think, before possibility of sin.

The form of the question puts two alternatives on precisely the same grounds; and we have no right, therefore, to assume that one of them is excluded by the questioners themselves. The fact of sin is stated as beyond question. The problem is, "Was the sin that of the man himself, or that of his parents?" The latter alternative is familiar to us, and daily experience shows us that within limits it holds good in both the moral and the physical worlds. It was clearly taught in the Second Commandment, and there is abundant evidence that the belief was at this time widely spread. We have greater difficulty in tracing the origin of the former alternative. It is not easy to accept the view that they thought of sin in his mother's womb, though it seems certain that the Jews currently interpreted such passages as Gen. xxv. 22 and Ps. li. 5 in this sense. That a more or less definite belief in the transmigration of souls was common among Jews at the time of our Lord's ministry is made probable by references in Philo and Josephus. We know it was a doctrine of the Essenes and of the Cabala; and we find it in the nearly

contemporary words of the Wisdom of Solomon, "Yea rather, being good, I came into a body undefiled" (viii. 20). Still it has been urged that it is not likely that such a belief would have made its way among the fishermen of Galilee. We have to remember, however, that among the disciples there are now men of Jerusalem as well as of Galilee, and that questions which men found hard to understand were constantly being raised and answered in the Rabbinic schools. In the meetings of the yearly festivals the answers of great Rabbis would be talked over and become generally known, and be handed on as maxims to those who knew little of the principles on which they were based. It was, then, probably with some thought that the life in this maimed body may not have been the first stage of his existence, that they ask, Did this man sin?

**(3) Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents.**—The answer is, of course, to be understood with the limitation of the question, "that he was born blind." Neither his special sin nor theirs was the cause of the blindness. Our version does not give quite accurately the form of the answer. It should be, *Neither did this man sin, nor his parents.* Their question sought to establish a connection between the suffering and some definite act of sin. The answer asserts that no such connection exists, and our Lord's words remain a warning against the spirit of judging other men's lives, and tracing in the misfortunes

should be made manifest in him. <sup>(4)</sup> I must work

the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the

and sorrows which they have to bear, the results of individual sin or the proof of divine displeasure. There is a chain connecting the sin of humanity and its woe, but the links are not traceable by the human eye. In the Providence of God vicarious suffering is often the noble lot of the noblest members of our race. No burden of human sorrow was ever so great as that borne by Him who knew no human sin.

**But that the works of God should be made manifest in him.**—They had sought to trace back the result of sin which they saw before them to a definite cause. He will trace it back to the region of the divine counsel, where purpose and result are one. Evil cannot be resolved into a higher good: it is the result of the choice exercised by freedom, and without freedom goodness could not be virtue. Permitted by God, it is yet overruled by Him. It has borne its fearful fruit in the death and curse of humanity, but its works have led to the manifestation of the works of God in the divine plan of redemption. It is so in this instance. The blindness of this beggar will have its result, and therefore in the divine counsel had its purpose, in the light which will dawn upon the spiritual as well as upon the physical blindness, and from him will dawn upon the world.

**(4) I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day.**—The better reading is probably that which has *we*, instead of “*I*,” and perhaps also that

which has *us*, instead of “*me*”, but this latter change is not so well supported by MS. authority. The clause would read then, *We must work the works of Him that sent Me (or us) while it is day.* He identifies the disciples with Himself in the redemptive work of His mission. There is before them a striking instance of the power of evil. He and they are there to manifest the power of good. They must gird themselves to the task. If we are right in placing the whole section from chap. vii. 37—x. 21 on the same great day of the Feast (comp. Note on verse 14), then this work must have come near the close of the day. The sun sinking to the west may have reminded them that the day was passing away, and that the night was approaching. He was reminded of the day of life, and the night of death. He will not be long in the world (verse 5). That night will be the close of His human work, and the shadows of evening are already falling upon Him.

**The night cometh, when no man can work.**—He does not except even Himself from the proverbial law. The day of opportunity passes, never to return. His own great work of doing the work of Him that sent Him, could only be done when that day was present. It has, of course, been ever done in the work of His Church under the guidance of His Spirit; but the work of His own human activity on earth ceased when the night came. Comp. chap. xi. 9 for this thought of the hours of the day.

night cometh, when no man can work. <sup>(5)</sup> As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> ch. 1. 9

<sup>(6)</sup> When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed

<sup>(5)</sup> As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.—Better, *when I am in the world*. The thought is that the two things necessarily co-exist. He is the true Light, and this true Light cannot be in the world without shining in its darkness. (Comp. Note on chap. i. 5.) The thought is here closely connected with His teaching in the Temple but a short time before (chap. viii. 12, “I am the Light of the world”), and also with the removal of physical and spiritual darkness which immediately followed.

<sup>(6)</sup> And he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.—The words “blind man” are omitted in some of the older MSS. The marginal rendering, *and He spread the clay upon the eyes of the blind man* (or, *upon his eyes*), is to be preferred.

The details given in this and the next verse are evidently to be regarded as part of the sign. They impressed themselves as such upon the eye-witnesses, and they have been recorded as such for us. We have then to seek their interpretation. At the outset we are met by the undoubted fact that our Lord here made use of means which, in part at least, were natural, and found their place in the ordinary prescriptions of the day. We know from the pages of Pliny, and Tacitus, and Suetonius, that the *saliva jejuna* was held to be a remedy in cases of blindness, and that the same remedy was used

by the Jews is established by the writings of the Rabbis. That clay was so used is not equally certain, but this may be regarded as the vehicle by means of which the saliva was applied. Here, then, as elsewhere, we may recognise the Divine manifested by means of the human, and see the ordinary remedy of every-day life blessed to meet a case that was beyond human power. Physicians had applied such means commonly to cases of post-natal blindness, but congenital blindness had always been regarded as incurable, and no instance to the contrary had ever been heard of (verse 32). The Great Physician, then, by using the ordinary means, will teach men that the healing powers of nature are His gracious gift, and that they are increased at the Giver’s will. Our daily sustenance in health and strength, our restored power after sickness or accident, the whole of ordinary life, which we too commonly connect only with ordinary means, is lifted to the higher region of union with Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being.

Another interpretation sees in the use of clay a symbolism which is to be traced to the first Creation, when man was formed from the dust of the earth. We find this as early as Irenæus, and it may well, therefore, represent an oral explanation, going back to the days of the Evangelist himself. The thought would be that our Lord will here exercise the same creative

the eyes of the blind man with the clay,<sup>1</sup> <sup>(7)</sup> and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is

1 Or,  
spread  
the clay  
upon  
the  
eyes of  
the  
blind  
man.

by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

power as that which made man, and will complete, by the gift of sight, this man, who had hitherto been maimed and without the chief organ of sense.

The use of means by which the healing power is conveyed is common to this instance with that of the blind man at Bethsaida (Mark viii. 22—26), and that of the deaf and dumb man in Decapolis (Mark vii. 32—37); while the two blind men in the house (Matt. ix. 27—31), and the two blind men at Jericho (Matt. xx. 29—34), are touched and receive their sight. The reader should carefully compare these passages of St. Matthew and St. Mark. Here it will be enough to observe that in each case the loss of a channel of communication between the individual man and the outer world is compensated by some special means which may help to assure him of the presence of the true Healer, and may furnish a foundation for his faith and hope. The deaf man cannot hear the tones of a voice that tells of mercy and love, but the touch applied to the ear may in part convey the same gracious truths. The blind man cannot see the look of compassion which others can see, but the saliva or the clay applied to the eye gives force to the word which is heard by the ear. In every case we should remember that the means is chiefly moral, preparing in the sufferer a mental condition which can receive the gift of healing, and that the

physical gift is itself regarded as a stage in the spiritual education. The wisest physicians of the body, and the wisest physicians of the soul, have alike sought to follow in the steps of Him who is their common Master. There are conditions of physical disease for which the truest medicines would be faith, and love, and hope—a mind at peace with itself and with God. There are morbid states of spiritual life that have their cause in physical derangement, and would find their truest remedy in the healthy tone of a restored and vigorous body.

(7) **Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.**—Comp. Note on chap. v. 2 (“Bethesda”), and see Luke xiii. 4 (“the tower in Siloam”). The locality is almost without doubt that now known by the Arabic form of the same name, the *Birket Silwán*, which is in the lower Tyropœon valley, between the Temple mountain and Mount Zion. It is about a quarter of a mile from the present city wall, but in the time of our Lord the wall extended up to it (*Jos. Wars*, v. 4, § 1; so the *Antonine Itinerary* in the fourth century). The place is frequently mentioned by Josephus, and there is every reason to believe that in the present pool we have the Siloah of Neh. iii. 15, the Shiloah of Isa. viii. 6, and the Siloam of the present passage. The form of the word here used by St. John is that found in the Greek translation of both the Old Testament passages.

<sup>(8)</sup> The neighbours therefore, and they which before

had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this

The words "wash in" mean literally, *wash into*, that is, "wash so that the clay from the eyes will pass into the tank."

The attempt to show that in the waters of Siloam, too, we have an ordinary remedial agent, must be abandoned, at least as far as regards blindness. The command recalls that to Naaman the Syrian (2 Kings v. 10), and not improbably recalled it to the mind of the blind man. In any case, it is a further stage in his spiritual education. It is a demand on the faith which realises the presence of the Power to heal. The place is chosen, perhaps, as a well-known spot, or as one at some little distance, so as to afford time for reflection and a test for obedience. It may be, however, that there is another reason for the choice. The pool of Siloam was bound up with all the religious feelings of the Feast of Tabernacles. A solemn procession went each morning to it, and carried water from it to the Temple. That water had already led to the teaching of the gift of the Spirit to every man who should receive the Messiah (see Notes on chap. vii. 37 *et seq.*), uttered, perhaps, on this very day (comp. verse 1). There would be attached, then, to the pool of Siloam a sacred significance that would be in itself a help to faith.

**Which is by interpretation, Sent.**—St. John sees a significance even in the name. The sending of the waters of this intermittent spring had given it the name Siloam. Popular belief connected the moving of the waters with the presence of an angel who gave them

their healing virtue. There was One then present who was the source of all life and power to heal, and He was Himself the sent of God. So He had taught men in words which had fixed themselves on St. John's mind (chaps. iii. 17, 34; v. 36, 38; vii. 29; viii. 42). So the prophet Isaiah had spoken of His work (chap. lxi. 1), and He had quoted that prophecy of His own work with the remarkable addition from the LXX., "and recovering of sight to the blind." (Comp. Matt. xi. 5, Luke iv. 18, and Isa. xlii. 7.) So He was later called "the Apostle (the One sent) of our profession" (Heb. iii. 1).

**And came seeing.**—These words need no Note for the reader who will pause to think of them, but we often pass over them without remembering that a whole world of visual objects now first burst upon the mind of him who was healed. We can only know in part what a revelation this was, but we may by thought realise it in some degree. There is no reference to his coming again to our Lord. He returned apparently to his usual dwelling, and this agrees with the mention of "neighbours" in the following verse.

**(8) They which before had seen him that he was blind.**

—The better reading is, *that he was a beggar*. The persons are the neighbours, who from living near him knew all about him, and those who used to see him at the spot where he sat begging. Both classes, of course, knew that he was blind.

**Is not this he that sat and begged?**—Better, *Is not this he*

he that sat and begged ?  
<sup>(9)</sup> Some said, This is he : others said, He is like him : but he said, I am he.  
<sup>(10)</sup> Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened ? <sup>(11)</sup> He answered and said, A man that is

called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash : and I went and washed, and I received sight. <sup>(12)</sup> Then said they unto him, Where is he ? He said, I know not.

*that sitteth and beggeth ?* The tenses are present, marking his usual custom.

<sup>(9)</sup> **H**e is like him.—The more probable reading is, *No ; but he is like him.* It is not that these speakers agree after some hesitation with those who assert the identity. They oppose to it their own opinion, that it is a case of resemblance only. He himself sets the question at rest by declaring that he is the same person.

The verse, and indeed the whole narrative, is one of the many striking instances of the natural form which is taken by the narrative of one personally acquainted with all the facts. We may suppose that St. John recorded this from the lips of the man himself. We can still see the whole picture ; —the man returning, observed by one or two neighbours, who spread the story ; the excitement of their curiosity ; the question whether he is really the same ; some struck by the points of identity in the features, and declaring that he is ; others struck by the features of the opened eyes lighting up the whole face, and declaring that he is not ; the simple declaration of the man himself, which is at once accepted as decisive—all this passes before us just as it occurred.

<sup>(10)</sup> **H**ow were thine eyes

opened ?—They wonder at the change wrought in him, and seek to know how it happened. The question is important if we adopt the better reading, *beggar*, for “blind,” in verse 8, as showing that they knew he had been blind, the moment they knew that he was the same person who used to sit and beg.

<sup>(11)</sup> **A** man that is called Jesus.—Some of the better MSS. read, “*The Man* that is called Jesus,” implying that He would be known to the blind man and his friends. They can hardly have failed to hear of His teaching at the feast.

**M**ade clay, and anointed mine eyes.—He gives the details in order, omitting the spitting on the ground, which he had not seen.

**A**nd I received sight.—The Greek word means exactly, “to see again.” The power, though given in this instance for the first time, was usually a restored power, and this is expressed in the word. This man uses the ordinary language of men, though in strictness it was not applicable to his own case. This use of the word is, moreover, justified by other examples.

<sup>(12)</sup> **I** know not.—He had not returned to our Lord (verse 7), who was passing by when He spoke to

(13) They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. (14) And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. (15) Then again the Phari-

sees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. (16) Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is

him (verse 1), and by the time the man had gone to the pool and had returned would have gone beyond his knowledge.

(13) **They brought to the Pharisees.**—More exactly, *They bring . . .* The present tense speaks of what they did, as the writer thinks of it in actual occurrence. Their question in the previous verse, and the fact stated in the following verse, seem to indicate that they did this in the spirit of opposition to our Lord. They may have been influenced also, as the parents were, by the agreement of the Jews to excommunicate any who should confess Christ (verse 22). By the term, “to the Pharisees,” we are not to understand the Sanhedrin, which did not meet on the Sabbath, and which is not spoken of by St. John as simply “the Pharisees,” but a body of the leading Pharisees who were the most bitter foes of Christ, and who seem at this time to have formed practically a permanent committee of the Sanhedrin, always ready to take counsel or action against Him. (Comp. Notes on chap. vii. 32, 45, 48.)

(14) **And it was the sabbath day.**—*i.e.*, most probably, the last day, that great day of the feast of chap. vii. 37. Nothing has taken place which makes it necessary to suppose any interval, and though

the discourses seem long, they would have occupied but a short time in delivery. The whole narrative follows in unbroken order, which makes it difficult to suppose that a week intervened.

**When Jesus made the clay.**—This is mentioned as a servile work which contravened the Sabbath law. The anointing the eyes with spittle on the Sabbath was specially forbidden by the decrees of the Rabbis. They held that no work of healing might be performed on the Sabbath except in cases of immediate danger.

On the question of our Lord’s relation to the Sabbath day, see Notes on chap. v. 16, *et seq.*, and comp. Matt. xii. 10, Luke xiii. 11—16, and xiv. 1—5.

(15) **Then again the Pharisees also asked.**—As the neighbours and acquaintances had done before (verse 10).

**He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes.**—The answer is the same as before, but briefer. It is that of a man who is answering against his will (comp. verse 27), and does not care to say more than he is obliged to.

**And do see.**—This differs from “I received sight” (verse 11). He now speaks as in conscious possession of the power to see. (Comp. verse 25.)

(16) **This man is not of God,**

not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there

was a division among them.  
<sup>(17)</sup> They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He

**because he keepeth not the sabbath day.**—See Note on verse 14, and reference there. Here the truth of the miracle is granted, but it is urged that the power by which it is wrought cannot be of God, because it was exercised on the Sabbath day. The inference is, that it was done by the influence of the power of evil.

**Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?**—This question is asked by the better party among the Pharisees, represented, as we know, by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, and perhaps by Gamaliel. They see the inference implied in the earlier question, and appeal to the nature of the miracles wrought. Works of mercy, and love, and power, were not the product of a life of sin, or of communion with the powers of darkness. We find evidence of this better spirit among the Pharisees before, in the question of Nicodemus (chap. vii. 51). It has now extended to others. The teaching on the earlier work on the Sabbath (chap. v.) has led some among them, at least, to look with allowance upon this.

**And there was a division among them.**—Comp. Note on chap. vii. 40.

<sup>(17)</sup> **They say unto the blind man again.**—The question is not asked by either of the parties, for this must have been noted, but by the assembly generally. They who questioned him in verse 15, ques-

tion him again now. They have differed among themselves, and they ask what impression the fact of the miracle had left upon him, who was the object of it, with regard to the person of Him who had performed it.

**What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes?**—Stress is laid on the pronoun. **What sayest thou?** He ought to know better than any one, seeing that his eyes had been opened, and this they admit, while the nature of his witness is uncertain; but immediately that is given they disbelieve the fact of the miracle, and soon reject with scorn him they question now (verse 34).

The English reader should observe the punctuation here, which rightly makes the question one. It is sometimes read as though it were, “**What sayest thou of Him? that He hath opened thine eyes?**” It is not, however, the fact which is here questioned, but the opinion of the man, based upon the fact, for the present assumed as true, which is called for.

**He is a prophet.**—The education of the man has been doing its work, and he is convinced that the power which has healed him is direct from God, and that the person who has exercised it is a messenger from God. His words are uttered in the brevity and calmness of clear conviction, and they are the direct negative to the statement of the Pharisees, “**This man is not from**

said, He is a prophet. (18) But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. (19) And they

asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? (20) His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: (21) but by what

God." (Comp. chaps. iii. 2; iv. 19; vi. 14.) It is important to note, that even in the language of the ordinary people, the word "prophet" did not mean simply a predictor of events in the future, but one who was as the representative of God. He was not only or chiefly a "fore-teller," but a "forth-teller," declaring God's truth, revealing His will and character, bearing the witness of divine works; but as the future is ever present to the divine counsels, prophecy, in the narrower sense, may be part of the work of the true prophet.

(18) **But the Jews did not believe.**—Better, *The Jews therefore did not believe.* The words are connected, as an inference, with those which precede. Because of this explanation of the fact, they are driven to the expedient of disbelieving the fact itself. The designation of those who take this position is remarkable. The substantive is not unexpressed, as in verse 17, nor is it "the Pharisees," as in verse 16, but it is the term which we have met with again and again, as marking out the leaders of the Jerusalem party who were opposed to Christ. (Comp. Note on chap. i. 19.)

**Until they called the parents.**—After they have done so, they can affect to doubt the fact

no longer (verse 26). But they hoped that the parents would from fear (verse 22) have given an answer which would have enabled them to deny the identity of person, or the fact of congenital blindness.

(19) **Is this your son, who ye say was born blind?**—The "ye" is emphatic; *ye* say he was born blind, as opposed to us, for we do not believe it. There are three questions. Is this your son? Do ye still say that he was born blind? which is incredible, as he now possesses the faculty of sight (verse 32). If you do, how do you account for the fact that he now sees?

**How then doth he now see?**—Their question means—"How does it come to pass, since he was born blind, that he all at once seeth?" The word rendered "now," here and in verses 21 and 25, conveys the idea of the suddenness of the change which had taken place.

(20) **We know that this is our son.** . . .—The two earlier questions of matter of fact they can answer with certainty. They know, as none beside themselves can know, that he was their son, and they know the painful truth that he was born blind.

(21) **But by what means he**

means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. <sup>(22)</sup> These words spake his parents, because

they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. <sup>(23)</sup> Therefore said his parents, He is

**now seeth.**—Better, *but how he now seeth.* The answer is in the exact words of the question, which is not seen in our version. They will not pass beyond the plain matters of fact of which they were certain.

**Or who hath opened his eyes.**—They pass here to a fourth question, which was not asked, but which they see to be the real point which the Pharisees are aiming at, and in which they have determined not to be entangled.

**He is of age; ask him.**—The better reading here is probably that which places “ask him” first: *ask him, he is of age.* The Received Text has been influenced by verse 23. The Greek expresses with the fullest emphasis, which it is not easy to preserve in English, that they intend to have nothing to do with this third question, but to leave it to their son to answer. Literally, it is, *Ask him; he is of full age; he himself will speak concerning himself.*

**(22) For the Jews had agreed already.**—This does not imply a formal decree of the Sanhedrin, but an agreement on the part of the leaders which they had made known to the people, and which they would have had little difficulty in carrying into effect. The word rendered “agreed” occurs again in the New Testament only twice. It expresses the covenant made

with Judas, in Luke xxii. 5; and the agreement of the Jews to kill Paul, in Acts xxiii. 20.

**He should be put out of the synagogue.**—Comp. chap. xvi. 2, and Luke vi. 22. The Jews at a later date distinguished three kinds of excommunication. (1) The lightest continued for thirty days, and prescribed four cubits as a distance within which the person may not approach any one, not even wife or children; with this limitation, it did not make exclusion from the synagogue necessary. (2) The severer included absolute banishment from all religious meetings, and absolute giving up of intercourse with all persons, and was formally pronounced with curses. (3) The severest was a perpetual banishment from all meetings, and a practical exclusion from the fellowship of God’s people. It has been sometimes supposed that the words of Luke vi. 22, (a) “separate you,” (b) “reproach you,” (c) “cast out your name,” refer to these gradations, but probably the only practice known in the time of our Lord was that which was later regarded as the intermediate form, falling short of perpetual banishment, but being, while the ban lasted, exclusion from all the cherished privileges of an Israelite

<sup>(23)</sup> See Note on verse 21.

of age ; ask him. (24) Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise : we know that this

man is a sinner. (25) He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not : one thing I know, that, whereas I was

(24) Then again called they the man that was blind.—He had not been present during the interview with his parents. They now wish him to believe that they have ascertained from his parents either that he was not their son, or that he was not really born blind. It is useless for him, therefore, to persist in his belief that a prophet had given him the power to see.

**Give God the praise.**—Better, *Give glory to God*. This phrase is very generally misunderstood, though almost all competent authorities are agreed as to its true meaning. It is not “Give God the praise for your cure, instead of this Man, who is a sinner. Trace the gift to its true source, and give glory to the true Giver.” This is wholly opposed to the context, for they are assuming that no cure has really taken place. The phrase is rather an adjuration calling upon the man to speak, as in God’s presence, and confess the whole truth. (Comp. the words of Joshua to Achan, “My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto Him ; and tell me now what thou hast done ; hide it not from me,” Josh. vii. 19. Comp. also 1 Sam. vi. 5 ; Jer. xiii. 16 ; 1 Esdr. ix. 8 ; Rev. xvi. 9.)

**We know that this man is a sinner.**—Some of them had said before that He was not from God, while others had felt that such miracles were inconsistent with the

belief that He was a sinner. The man himself had declared his simple conviction that He was a prophet (verses 16 and 17). They now assert, with the emphasis of an authority which is beyond question, that they know Him to be a sinner.

(25) **Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not.**—The words “or no” are added to the text, but rightly complete the meaning. He, like his parents, will confine himself to matters of fact coming under his own certain knowledge. They had declared authoritatively that they knew this Man to be one whose life was characterised by sin. He is convinced that this cannot be so (verses 31, 33), but he does not dispute their assertion ; he simply makes his own, which cannot be gainsaid, and which cuts the ground from under them.

**One thing I know.**—For this use of “one thing” to mark the chief thing which is so important that all others are excluded, and it is left as the only one in the mind, comp. Mark x. 21 (“one thing thou lackest”) and Luke x. 42 (“one thing is needful”).

**Whereas I was blind, now I see.**—Better, *Being a blind man, now I see*. He places the two things in contrast. He was the well-known “blind man,” whose experience of his own blindness had extended from birth to manhood. They declare that he has not been healed. He is conscious of his power to see, and this one thing he affirms. The

blind, now I see. <sup>(26)</sup> Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how

opened he thine eyes? <sup>(27)</sup> He answered them, I have told you already, and

difficulty is of their making; let them explain it as they think best.

<sup>(26)</sup> Then said they to him again.—Failing to establish their denial of the fact, they repeat their questionings as to the means used. They hope, it may be, to detect some difference in the accounts, or something which they can construe into a charge against our Lord; or, perhaps, as some have suggested, their repeated questions are merely to gain time or cover their retreat. His honest boldness is too much for their craft. Their adjuration to speak as in God's presence has been answered in a way they little expected, and the questions they now repeat are asked because they know not what to say.

<sup>(27)</sup> I have told you already, and ye did not hear.—The man becomes weary of this cross-questioning, the purpose of which is sufficiently clear to him. His first answer was in the fewest possible words (verse 15, compared with verse 7), and even these he will not repeat. There is some difficulty about the meaning of the word "hear" in the two clauses of this verse. When the man says "Ye did not hear," we naturally understand "did not heed;" but when he goes on to say, "Wherefore would ye hear it again?" the word clearly has its ordinary sense of hearing. The same word occurs in the two clauses in the Greek, just as it does in the English, and we are scarcely justified in giving it two distinct meanings. If we were to read both clauses as questions,

we should avoid this difficulty, and get a sense which would suit the evident feeling of the man. He is impatient, and expresses this in a series of rapid questions. "I have told you already, and did ye not hear? wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be His disciples?"

**Will ye also be his disciples?**—The words refer, probably, to some who are His disciples, not to the man himself as being, or being ready to become, a disciple. This is a further stage of his spiritual education which is to follow, but has not yet arrived (verses 35—38). The man must have known of the existence of a band of disciples, who indeed in his presence had questioned their Master concerning him (verse 2), and it is not unlikely that while the parents were being questioned, the son may have learnt more concerning the work of Christ. The question puts the irony in the severest form, "Surely *ye* also do not wish to become His disciples?" It may have been designed, or may only have been as an arrow drawn at a venture; but there must have been among those of whom it was asked, men who tried in vain to encase themselves in the armour of authority, which would repel his shaft and silence him. It must have gone through the joints of the harness and pierced to the hearts of men like Nicodemus, who were half-disciples without the "courage of their convictions." Here was the blind beggar making an open

ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?  
<sup>(28)</sup> Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. <sup>(29)</sup> We know that

God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.  
<sup>(30)</sup> The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from

avowal of that which the Pharisees and rulers dared only to confess by night (chap. iii. 2).

<sup>(28)</sup> **Then they reviled him.**—The Greek word occurs only here in the Gospels. The other passages where it occurs in the New Testament are Acts xxiii. 4, 1 Cor. iv. 12, and 1 Pet. ii. 23. It expresses the passionate outburst of their anger, which was excited by his question, and finds vent in heaping reproaches upon him.

**Thou art his disciple.**—They cast his own reproach back upon himself, but in stronger words than he had used they mark out the distinction between Jesus and themselves. *Thou art that Man's disciple.*

**But we are Moses' disciples.**—The emphasis of the words is important. *We*, as opposed to *thou*; *Moses*, as opposed to *that Man's*.

<sup>(29)</sup> **We know that God spake unto Moses.**—Better, *We know that God hath spoken unto Moses.* “He was commissioned,” they would say, “by God, and received a revelation from God which remains to us.” They would press here, as before, the authority of the great Lawgiver, which to every Israelite was final. They will not, therefore, accept this Man as a prophet. Their words have tacit reference also to the fact that His

works were in their eyes a transgression of the Mosaic law. There is an opposition between them. Both cannot be right, and they will themselves continue to be disciples of Moses. He, it is implied, by confessing Jesus to be a prophet, was practically denying the authority of Moses.

**As for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.**—In our English version the words in italics are added, but they do not express more than the single Greek word, which is used with contempt. Before they had said, “Howbeit we know this Man whence He is; but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is” (chap. vii. 27; see Notes on this and the next verse). They here oppose the divine authority of the mission of Moses, which was acknowledged by all, to the absence, as they would say, of any such authority for the work of Jesus. Their words are meant to convey more than they express, coming as they do in sharp contrast with “God spake unto Moses.” They would say again, “This Man is not of God” (verse 16), “We know that this Man is a sinner” (verse 24). For the expression, “whence He is,” i.e., “what authority He has,” comp. chap. xix. 9 and Matt. xxi. 23.

<sup>(30)</sup> **Why herein is a marvellous thing.**—Several of the better

whence he is, and *yet* he hath opened mine eyes.  
<sup>(31)</sup> Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if

any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. <sup>(32)</sup> Since the world began was it not

MSS. read more emphatically, *the marvellous thing*. He again puts two contradictory positions—their assertion that they knew not by what authority Jesus did these things (whence He was), and the evident fact that He had opened his eyes. He cannot reconcile their statement with what he knows to be true, and he states his wonder in the strongest form.

**That ye know not from whence he is—i.e.,** ye whose business it is to know, ye who claim for yourselves a special knowledge of all such questions, and whose duty it is to inquire into the authority of any one who asserts that he is a teacher or a prophet. (Comp. Note on chap. i. 24.)

<sup>(31)</sup> **Now we know that God heareth not sinners.**—What they should have known, but asserted that they did not, he proceeds to declare. The argument of this and the two following verses may be stated in syllogistic form, thus:—(1) God heareth not sinners, but only those who worship Him and do His will. (2) That God heareth this Man is certain, for such a miracle could be performed only by divine power. (3) This Man, therefore, is not a sinner, but is from God.

He assumes as a general truth, which all accepted, that God heareth not sinners. This is based upon numerous passages in the Old Testament Scriptures—*e.g.*, Isa. i. 11—15; Pss. lxxvi. 18, and cix. 7; Prov. xv. 8, 29; Job xxvii. 9, and

xxxv. 13. We are, of course, to understand the word “sinner” in the sense in which they had used it in verses 16 and 24. They had said that they knew this Man to be a sinner, and they meant one who was a sinner in a darker sense than that in which the word may be applied to all men. He asserts, as a truth which agrees with the whole teaching of the Old Testament, and with all the religious instincts of men, that there would be no communion between such a man and heaven. Such a man could not be commissioned as a prophet, or so heard in heaven as to have power to work miracles on earth. (Comp. Notes on chap. xi. 41, 42, and see Acts iii. 12.) Men have sometimes taken the words altogether apart from their context, and read into them a dark meaning which they cannot be rightly made to bear. Neither these words, nor any words of God, assign any limit to the divine grace, which extendeth to every penitent sinner; nor is there any voice of any child of man lifted to heaven, which is not heard by the Father who is in heaven.

It has often been noted here that the words are spoken by one whose authority does not make them binding upon us; but it is clear that they were accepted as a general truth. We need no other explanation if we bear in mind the special sense which is here attached to the word “sinner.”

<sup>(32)</sup> **Since the world began**

heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. <sup>(33)</sup> If this man were not of God, he

could do nothing. <sup>(34)</sup> They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou

**was it not heard.**—Literally, *from the world-age was it not heard.* The phrase is a reminiscence of Isa. lxiv. 4. (Comp. also Luke i. 70.)

**The eyes of one that was born blind.**—This differentiates the miracle from the others in cases of blindness, and still more from all ordinary cures of maladies of the eyes. The man expresses what was simply true, that no science or skill had at that time been equal to the removal of blindness which had accompanied birth. That modern science has succeeded in making even this possible, is altogether beside the question, unless it is pretended that human skill could effect it under like conditions and with the same means. For the man himself there had been years of darkness without a ray of hope, for none had ever dreamt that recovery was within the limits of possibility; and now that the blessing has come, he regards it as the gift of God, and doubts not that the immediate giver is from God.

<sup>(33)</sup> **If this man were not of God.**—His argument meets each of their assertions. His general assumption, admitted as a universal truth (verse 31), had denied their assertion that this Man was a sinner. His conclusion now denies their assertion, “This Man is not of God” (verse 16).

**He could do nothing**—i.e., nothing of this kind, no miracle such as this, much less this miracle itself.

<sup>(34)</sup> **Thou wast altogether born in sins.**—Their reproach now takes the most malignant form, and shrinks not from casting in his teeth the calamity of his birth as the mark of special sin. “Thou didst come into the world,” these words mean, “bearing the curse of God upon thy face. Thou hast said that God heareth not sinners. Thy life in its first moments bore the marks of some fearful crime.”

**And dost thou teach us?**—i.e., “Dost thou, marked more than is the common lot of man by sin, teach us, who are the authorised teachers and expositors of the truth?” For any one to have doubted their authority would have seemed out of question; but here was one who had been a beggar, one of the “people of the earth,” untrained in the Law, and therefore cursed (comp. Note on chap. vii. 49), and, more than this, altogether born in sin, who was actually teaching them!

**And they cast him out.**—These words are generally taken to mean excommunication, as in the margin, and it is certain that they may have this sense. (Comp. 3 John 10.) Having this meaning before them, our translators did not, however, think it the better one, and their view seems to be borne out by the general impression which we get from the narrative. The man, with all his boldness, has not technically fallen under the ban they had threatened,

teach us? And they cast him out.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>(35)</sup> Jesus heard that they had cast him out;

and when he had found

<sup>1</sup> Or, ex-  
com-  
mu-ni-  
cated  
him.

him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? <sup>(36)</sup> He answered and said, Who is

for he has not "confessed that He was Christ" (verse 22). A decree of the Sanhedrin would have been necessary, and this must have been formally pronounced. Now, we feel that in a detailed narrative such as we have here, all this would hardly be told in a single short sentence. It seems to be rather that their anger has now passed all bounds. They cannot refute the truth which, in his honest, homely way, he has put before them. They can only heap reproaches upon him, and thrust him by force out of their presence.

<sup>(35)</sup> Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him.—There is no hint of time or place. We may naturally suppose that this seeking and finding on the part of our Lord followed immediately on the expulsion by the Pharisees. His parents had, for fear of the Pharisees, forsaken him; and they who should have been as the shepherd of this sheep of the flock of Israel, had thrust him from them; but in his case, too, the words of the Psalmist were to be fulfilled, "When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord taketh me up." The Good Shepherd, who gathereth the lambs with His arm, and carrieth them in His bosom, is at hand to lead him.

Dost thou believe on the Son of God? — There is much doubt about the true reading here. A majority of the best MSS. have "the Son of Man," which is the

usual term applied by our Lord to Himself. But comp. Notes on chaps. i. 51, and x. 36; and see Matt. xxvi. 63, and xxvii. 43. On the other hand the reading, "Son of God," is certainly as old as the second century, and seems to supply the sense which the context requires. The man had been cast out. Our Lord hears of this and knows it is because of his bold confession that He was a prophet. The lesson He had before taught him had been learnt, and had borne fruit. He will lead him from that confession to a higher one. He marks him out as distinct from others, and asks a question which is meant by its form to lead him to an affirmative answer, "Thou believest on the Son of God?" This question follows naturally on the truth which the man had grasped. "If this Man were not of God, He could do nothing" (verse 33); and this title was one of the theocratic names of the Messiah. (Comp. chap. i. 49.) The title, "Son of Man," could hardly have conveyed to him the same meaning. Its insertion in some of the MSS. here is probably to be traced to the fact that copyists substituted the title which our Lord more generally used for the rarer one. We should carefully bear in mind that though our Lord does not usually apply the title "Son of God" to Himself, He constantly asserts the truth which it expresses. (Comp., e.g., in this Gospel, chaps. v., vii., and viii.)

<sup>(36)</sup> Who is he, Lord, that I

he, Lord, that I might believe on him? <sup>(37)</sup> And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with

thee. <sup>(38)</sup> And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

<sup>(39)</sup> And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into

might believe on him?—For “Lord” it would be better to read *Sir*, as in chaps. iv. 11, 19; v. 7, *et al.* The man does not express by it more than the reverence to a prophet or teacher. He recognises Him by the voice which he had heard before, and now for the first time sees Him. He is ready to believe on the Messiah whom all expected, and he feels that this prophet, who had opened his eyes, can tell him who the Messiah is. The form of the question, “Who is He?,” suggests that he half expected that He, upon whom he looked, was more than a prophet, and was none other than the Messiah Himself. In the absence of any such thought, the question would have taken a vague form, such as “Where is He?” or “When shall He appear?” He asks as one who knows that the object of his faith is at hand.

<sup>(37)</sup> **Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.**—The answer reminds us of that to the woman of Samaria, “I that speak unto thee am He” (chap. iv. 26); but here both the sense of sight and that of hearing, are appealed to as conveying knowledge to the mind. There is a special fitness in the emphasis thus laid upon the seeing Him, in the case of one whose very power to see was witness to the presence of the Messiah. The words do not refer to any earlier meeting, but the perfect tense refers to the com-

pletion of the act of vision and the abiding impression.

<sup>(38)</sup> **And he said, Lord, I believe.**—The title is repeated, but now with the deeper meaning. His half-faith has passed into full conviction. The spiritual education has led him step by step from “the Man that is called Jesus” (verse 11) to the confession that He is “a prophet” (verse 17), and that He is “of God” (verse 33), to the belief that He is the Messiah. It is the course of a plain man in the honesty of his heart daring to think for himself, and to act upon his convictions. He declines to be silenced by authority, or ensnared in the mazes of argument. The ultimate facts of his own consciousness supply him with a definite foundation of truth, and this is immovable. The steps by which he advances in knowledge are a striking comment on the promise (chap. vii. 17).

**And he worshipped him.**—The act of adoration is the necessary expression of his faith in the Son of God. We may not think that he has yet learnt all that this term includes; but he has at least learnt that the Son of God has the attribute of the divine glory, and is the object of human worship. It should be noted that St. John uses the word here rendered “worshipped” only when speaking of the worship of God. (Comp. also chaps. iv. 20—24 and xii. 20.)

<sup>(39)</sup> **For judgment I am come**

this world, that they which see not might see ; and that they which see might

be made blind. <sup>(40)</sup> And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these

**into this world.**—These words arise immediately out of what has preceded. The beggar has passed from a state of physical blindness, and has received the faculty of sight. He has passed from a state of spiritual blindness, and has received the power to recognise and believe on Jesus Christ as the Son of God. He did not see, but the result of the manifestation of the Messiah is for him that he now does see. Conscious of his own spiritual blindness, he asked, “Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?” and to him, as to every earnest and humble seeker after truth, because in all his seeming need he really “hath,” there is given that he may “have more abundance.” In marked contrast to this spirit of humility and desire to come to the light, was that of the Pharisees. They claimed to have the “key of knowledge” (Matt. xi. 25), and were, as a Pharisee represents him who is “called a Jew,” “confident that they were guides of the blind, lights of [them which are in darkness]” (Rom. ii. 17 *et seq.*; comp. 1 Cor. i. 21; iii. 18). Conscious of their own spiritual light, they felt no need of a truer Light, and therefore could not see it; and from them, as from every careless and self-trusting possessor of truth, because, in all his seeming abundance, he really “hath not,” there is taken away “even that he hath.” (Comp. Note on chap. i. 16.)

This passing from darkness to light, and from light to darkness,

suggests thoughts which our Lord has already uttered in chap. iii. 17—19, and which will meet us again more fully in chap. xii. 37—50. (See Notes on these passages.) Judgment is not the ultimate end of His coming, for He came to save the world; but it is an end, and therefore a result. The special form of the word rendered “judgment” in this place is used nowhere else by St. John, and indicates that what is here thought of is not the act of judging, but the concrete result—the sentence pronounced after judgment. His coming was a bringing light into the darkness of men’s hearts, a testing of the false and the true, and as men accepted or rejected Him they pronounced a judicial sentence upon themselves. That light judged no man, and yet by it every man was judged.

**That they which see not might see.**—The force of these words lies in the fact that the phrases, “they which see not” and “they which see,” are to be interpreted as from their own point of view—“That they which think they see not might really see; and that they which think they see might really be made blind.”

**(40) And some of the Pharisees which were with him.**—The words in the preceding verse are not addressed specially to any one. The Pharisees would be still watching our Lord, and some had probably followed the beggar, expecting that our Lord would seek him, and hoping that the interview

words, and said unto him, | Are we blind also? <sup>(41)</sup> Jesus said unto them, If ye were

blind, ye should have no sin: but now yesay, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

might furnish some ground for a fresh charge against one or both of them. It is the presence of mental conditions such as theirs and such as his that has brought again to our Lord's thoughts the judicial result of His manifestation; and this rises to His lips as an utterance of the solemn thought that fills His mind. The Pharisees hear this exclamation, and apply to themselves that which their own state suggested; but which was expressed as, and is, a wide law, holding true for all mankind.

**Are we blind also?**—They misunderstand His words, for He has asserted of the blind ("they which see not") that the result of His coming is "that they might see." But yet they do not understand the words in a physical sense, in which they could have had no application to themselves. Care is required to catch the force of the term in these three verses, and it may be well to distinguish again the meanings attached to the word blind. It is used (1) for physical blindness. This has been its meaning throughout the chapter. It suggests the imagery in these verses, but is not itself present in the thought, which is of spiritual blindness only. (2) For conscious spiritual blindness ("they which see not," "they which think they see not"), which is really the first step to spiritual sight. (3) For unconscious spiritual blindness ("they which see," "they which think they see"), which is really

the first step to a total loss of spiritual perception.

**(41) If ye were blind, ye should have no sin.**—His answer is that He does not place them among those who are in this second sense blind. If they were among those "which see not" they would be conscious of their blindness, and would seek for spiritual light. They would ask, "Who is He, Lord, that we may believe on Him?" and would not ask in vain. In that case their present rejection of Him would arise from ignorance willing to be overcome, and this ignorance, not being wilful, would not be sin. Conscious ignorance would be the first step towards knowledge.

**But now ye say, We see.**—Their true place is among those who were spiritually blind, and were unconscious of it, "they which see," "they which think they see." For them the first step towards true spiritual light must be a consciousness of blindness. As it is, as long as they think that they see, there is no ground for hope. (Comp. Matt. ix. 12, 13.)

**Therefore your sin remaineth.**—The word "therefore" should probably be omitted. The words "Your sin remaineth," or better, *Your sin abideth* (comp. Note on chap. iii. 36), stand alone in their awful solemnity. They stand side by side with "Ye say, We see." The two states are one. The assertion of spiritual knowledge and independence was the

CHAPTER X.—<sup>(1)</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you,

A.D. 32.

He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold,

original cause of sin (Gen. iii. 8), and while spiritual pride exists sin cannot cease.

## X.

## [(2) JESUS IS TRUTH, LIGHT, AND LOVE (continued).]

(c) *Jesus is Love* (chap. x. 1—42).

(a) The Good Shepherd, who giveth His life for the sheep (verses 1—20).

(B) The discourse at the Feast of the Dedication (verses 22—38).

The true sheep hear the Shepherd's voice (verses 22—30).

The charge of blasphemy shown by their Scriptures to be groundless (verses 30—38).

(γ) Rejected in Jerusalem, Jesus goes away beyond Jordan.]

(1) **Verily, verily, I say unto you.**—This formula is not used at the beginning of a fresh discourse, but is, in every case, the solemn introduction of some development of our Lord's deeper teaching. (Comp. Note on chap. i. 51). We are not, then, to regard this chapter as a new subject, but as part of the teaching commenced in chap. ix. 25, and arising out of the sign of healing the blind man. This sign is present to their thoughts at the close of the discourse, in verse 21.

**He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold.**—The special form which the discourse here takes has been thought, with a probability which does not

fall far short of certainty, due to the actual presence of a sheepfold with the shepherds and their flocks. (See chap. v. 2.) We know that Bethesda was near the "sheep-gate," and we have seen that it is not improbably to be identified with a covered portion of the Pool of Siloam. (See Note on chap v. 2.) In any case, there must have been sheepfolds sufficiently near to make it possible that they had arrived at one, and the change in the central points of the allegory find their most natural explanation in thoughts of the shifting scene on which it is based. The description of such a scene, by Bochart, written more than two centuries ago, has been borne out by all modern travellers. We have to think of an open fold, surrounded by a wall or railing, into which, at eventide, the shepherds lead their flocks, committing them, during the night, to the care of an under-shepherd, who guards the door. In the morning they knock and the porter opens the door, which has been securely fastened during the night, and each shepherd calls his own sheep, who know his voice and follow him to the pasturage. (Comp. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, vol. i., pp. 299—302.)

It is to some part of such a scene as this, passing before our Lord's eye as He taught, that we have to trace the words which follow. But we must remember that His mind and theirs were full of thoughts ready to pass into a train like this. "Thy servants are shepherds, both we and also our fathers" (Gen.

but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief

and a robber. <sup>(2)</sup> But he that entereth in by the

xlvii. 3), was the statement of the first sons of Israel, and it was true of their descendants. This truth was bound up with their whole history. The greatest heroes of Israel—Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David—had all been shepherds, and no imagery is more frequent in prophecy or psalm than that drawn from the shepherd's work. We must fill our minds with these Old Testament thoughts if we would understand this chapter. Let any one, before commencing it, read thoughtfully Ps. xxiii., Isa. xl. 11, Jer. xxiii. 1—4, Ezek. xxxiv., and especially Zech. xi. 4—17, and he will find that he has the key which unlocks most of its difficulties. We have, then, the scene passing before their eyes, and the Old Testament thoughts of the Shepherd, connected as they were, on one hand with Jehovah and the Messiah, and on the other with the careless shepherds of Israel, dwelling in their minds; and we have, in the events which have just taken place, that which furnishes the starting-point, and gives to all that follows its fulness of meaning. The Pharisees claimed for themselves that they were shepherds of Israel. They decreed who should be admitted to, and who should be cast out from the fold. They professed to be interpreters of God's truth, and with it to feed His flock. Pharisees, shepherds! what did they, with their curses and excommunications, know of the tenderness of the Shepherd who "shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with

young"? Pharisees feed the flock of God! What had they, with their pride and self-righteousness, ever known of the infinite love and mercy of God; or what had their hearts ever felt of the wants and woes of the masses of mankind? This poor blind beggar was an example of their treatment of the weaker ones of the flock. In spirit, if not in deed (chap. ix. 22, 34), they had thrust him out from the fold of God. The true Shepherd had sought and found this lost sheep, who is now standing near, in His presence and in that of the false shepherds. He teaches who the Shepherd and what the flock of God really are.

On the meaning of "the door," see the fuller expansion in verses 7—9.

**Climbeth up some other way.**—Or, more exactly, *climbeth up from elsewhere*—i.e., from some part of the fence, away from the door where the porter is watching.

**The same is a thief and a robber.**—The former of these words means the petty thief who commits the smaller or unobserved robbery. The latter means the brigand or highwayman, and is applied, e.g., to Barabbas and to the two crucified with our Lord. The words are repeated in verse 8. They are probably joined together to express, in all its fulness, the idea which is common to both. If we press the individual sense of each, it may be that the false shepherds united the meaner faults and the greater crimes.

<sup>(2)</sup> **But he that entereth in**

door is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>(3)</sup> To him the porter openeth; and the

sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them

by the door.—See Notes on verses 7—9.

**Is the shepherd of the sheep.**—Better, *is a shepherd of the sheep*. The word here (comp. verse 12) simply characterises him that entereth by the door as a shepherd, in opposition to the robber who climbeth over the fence.

**(3) To him the porter openeth.**—The word “porter” is not, perhaps, misleading to many, but for the sake of the possible few, it may be noted that *door-keeper* is what is here meant. There is no further interpretation of what, in the spiritual fold, corresponds to the office of the porter, whereas the door and the shepherd are successively made the texts of fuller expositions of Christ’s own work. We are not, therefore, to regard “the porter” as an essential part of the allegory (comp. verse 5), nor need we trouble ourselves with the various expositions which have been given of it. At the same time, we should not forget that the thought is one which impressed itself on the mind of St. Paul. At Ephesus “a great and effectual door was opened unto him” (1 Cor. xvi. 9); “when he came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel a door was opened unto him of the Lord” (2 Cor. ii. 12); the Colossians are exhorted to pray that “a door of the word (the gospel) may be opened, to speak the mystery of Christ” (Col. iv. 3); at the close of the first missionary journey he and Barnabas told how

“God had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles” (Acts xiv. 27). We have St. Paul’s authority, therefore, for understanding by the “door-keeper,” if we are to interpret it here, the Holy Spirit, whose special work it is to determine who are shepherds and sheep, and to call each to the work and position given to him by God. We must be careful to note, with this interpretation, that St. Paul gives divine titles to Him who thus opens the door, lest, from the humble position of the porter in the material fold, we should be led to unworthy thoughts of Him who is “neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.”

**And the sheep hear his voice.**—The reference is here to the whole of the sheep in the fold; they are all roused as they hear a shepherd’s cry, which is the signal for their being led forth to the pastures.

**And he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.**—Now the sheep of the shepherd’s own flock are thought of. They are singled out from the rest, each one by its own name. A mountain shepherd in our own country, and even a shepherd’s dog, will know a single sheep among hundreds from other flocks, and there is nothing more strange in the sheep being trained to know its own name and its shepherd’s voice. We have to think, also, of a much closer relationship between the owner and his sheep, which were almost part of his family,

out. <sup>(4)</sup> And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him : for

they know his voice. <sup>(5)</sup> And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him : for they know not

than any with which we are familiar. All animals learn to know those who love and protect them, and the Eastern shepherd was as much with his sheep as we are with the domestic animals. (Comp. 1 Sam. xvii. 34—37 ; 2 Sam xii. 3.) The practice was not unknown in the West, for Aristotle tells us that “in each flock they train the bell-wether to lead the way, whenever he is called by name by the shepherd” (*History of Animals*, vi. 19) ; and Theocritus has handed down to us the names by which the Shepherd Lacon addressed three of his flock :—

“Ho, Curly-horn ; Ho, Swift-foot, leave the tree,  
And pasture eastward where ye  
Baldhead see.”—*Idyll* v. 102, 3.

<sup>(4)</sup> And when he putteth forth his own sheep.—The majority of the better MSS. add the word “all.” The tense is past. We should read, therefore, *when he has put forth all his own sheep*. The addition is important as marking the care of the shepherd to count his flock and see that none is missing. The word “put forth” is stronger than “lead out,” in the previous verse, and represents the details of the action as it took place in the sheepfold. The shepherd would call each sheep by name, and when it answered to its name would drag it outside the fold. Though it knew its shepherd, it would be unwilling to separate itself from the whole flock. One

by one, then, he calls his sheep, and places them outside the fold.

**He goeth before them, and the sheep follow him.**—This is one of the incidents in the management of an Eastern flock, which strikes all who see it for the first time, and is abundantly illustrated in books of Eastern travel. The details are here given with minute accuracy. When the last sheep has been brought out the shepherd places himself at their head, and the flock together follow him.

**For they know his voice.**—The word is stronger than the one in verse 3, “and the sheep hear his voice.” It expresses the familiar knowledge which the little flock has of the voice of their own shepherd who leads them day by day.

<sup>(5)</sup> **And a stranger will they not follow.**—The “stranger” is any one other than their own shepherd, and the term is not to be limited to the “thief” and “robber” of verse 1. The thought is of the flock following the shepherd to the pasture. On the road they would meet other persons whom they would not follow. Some would, as thieves and robbers, seek to lead them away, calling them by their names and imitating their shepherd’s cry ; but they have, by long usage, got to know his voice, and will not follow a stranger.

**But will flee from him.**—A strange word is a source of alarm to them. With the known tone

the voice of strangers.

(6) This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they un-

derstood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

of the shepherd's voice they have learnt to associate protection, guidance, food. His voice recalls these associations. A stranger's voice is something unknown, and therefore feared. It is as the voice of a plundering Arab who has called the flock before, or as the cry of a wild beast who has broken into the fold at night. The associations with unfamiliar words are only of things which are evil.

(6) **This parable spake Jesus unto them.**—*Better, this allegory spake Jesus unto them.*—The word rendered "parable" is the wider word (*παροιμία, paroimia*) which includes every kind of figurative and proverbial teaching, every kind of speech, as the etymology reminds us, which departs from the usual course (*οὐλος, oimos*). St. John nowhere uses the word "parable." The word *paroimia* occurs again in chap. xvi. 25, 29, and once besides in the New Testament; this is in 2 Pet. ii. 22 ("according to the true proverb"), in a quotation from the Greek version of Prov. xxvi. 11, where the Hebrew word is *māshal*. (Comp. Matt. xiii. 3, and Trench *On the Parables*, pp. 8—10.) The discourse of this chapter differs from the true parable, which is a story in which the outer facts are kept wholly distinct from the ideal truths that are to be taught; whereas here the form and the idea interpenetrate each other at every point. It is so in the other so-called "parable" in this Gospel (chap. xv). Strictly speaking, neither the "Good Shepherd" nor

the "True Vine" is a parable. Both are "allegories," or rather, they are, as there is every reason to think, allegorical interpretations of actual events in the material world, which are thus made the vehicle of spiritual truths. It will follow from this that the interpretation of every point in the history of the material facts (e.g., "the porter" in verse 3) is not always to be pressed. In the parable the story is made to convey the spiritual truth, and with greater or lesser fulness every point in it may have its spiritual counterpart. The outer facts which are allegorised exist independently of the spiritual truth. The fact that they express it at some central points is all that is necessary for the allegory, and greater caution should attend the use of any addition to the interpretation which is given.

**But they understood not what things they were . . .**—They of course understood the outer facts, then passing before their eyes, or, in any case, well known to them. What they did not understand was the spiritual truths underlying these phenomena. They must have known His words had some spiritual meaning. They were accustomed to every form of allegorical teaching, and they could not have thought that He was simply describing to them the every-day events of the shepherd's life. But they who think that they see (chap. ix. 41) are spiritually blind, and cannot understand the elements of divine truth.

<sup>(7)</sup> Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the

door of the sheep. <sup>(8)</sup> All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers:

<sup>(7)</sup> Then said Jesus unto them again.—Better, *Therefore said Jesus again*, the words “unto them” being of uncertain authority. He says what follows because they did not understand what He had said before. It is not that a new allegory begins at this place. He spake in the beginning of the door and of the shepherd (verses 1, 2). He now proceeds to unfold the meaning of both.

**Verily, verily, I say unto you.**—Comp. Note on verse 1.

**I am the door of the sheep.**—Taking these words in connection with verses 1 and 2, they seem to mean not “the door for the sheep,” but “the door to the sheep,” “the door into the sheep-fold.” Our Lord returns to the words, and explains them more fully, in verse 9.

**All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers.**

—Comp. Note on verse 1. The Sinaitic MS. and several of the earlier versions, read this verse without the words translated “before Me,” but the balance of authority is strongly in their favour; and the fact of their being hard to understand, or having been misunderstood, is the probable reason of their omission. Retaining them, as we seem bound to do, we are also bound to give them their ordinary temporal meaning. There can be but one rendering which suggests itself to the unbiassed mind, and that is the rendering of our version. The Greek words and the English words are equally plain, and other renderings

are due to the exigencies of interpretation.

What, then, do the words mean? Their force seems to be all-inclusive; and yet they cannot contradict Christ’s own words, which have excluded Abraham, Moses, the prophets, John the Baptist, from any possibility of such thoughts. (See chaps. iv. 22; v. 33, 39, 45; vii. 19.) They cannot, on the other hand, be limited to false Christs, who did not come before but after our Lord. (Comp. Note on chap. v. 43.) Here, as often, the true meaning seems for the most part to have been overlooked because men have sought it elsewhere than in the words themselves, and in their place among other words. The thought which precedes and which follows is that Jesus is Himself “the Door.” “All that ever came before Me” is in immediate contrast to this thought, and the sense is, “all professing to be themselves the door, to be the means by which men enter the fold, to be the Mediator between man and God.” The Old Testament teachers cannot be meant, because they witnessed to the true Door. But there had been growing up since the return from the Captivity, and the close of the Old Testament canon, a priestly caste in the place of the prophetic schools, and these men had been in practice, if not in word, claiming for themselves the position of door to the kingdom of God. There were Hillels and Shammais, heads of parties and of factions, whose word was to their followers

but the sheep did not hear them. <sup>(9)</sup> I am the door :

| by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and

as the word of God; there were Pharisees then standing round Him who had solemnly decreed that any one who should confess Him to be the Messiah should be shut out from Temple and from synagogue, and that they themselves would in God's name pronounce a curse upon his head (chap. ix. 22). As "thieves" were they, and as "robbers;" wolves in sheep's clothing, stealing into the flock of Christ and rending those who were the true sheep. (Comp. the analogous language of Luke xi. 52.) The lawyers closed the door and plundered and oppressed those whom they kept outside.

Attention should be paid to the present tense of the verb "are" in this sentence, which seems in itself to suggest that the words which follow find their application in the case of the persons then actually living.

**But the sheep did not hear them.**—Read again verses 3—5. What is true of the sheep and the voice of the stranger is true also of man and of every voice which is not of God. The heart of the child answers to the voice of the Father; it trembles at any voice which is unknown. The conscience of mankind knows the voice of God; but it will not hear the voice of the devil, nor the unreal voice of man claiming to speak in God's name. It will not call bitter, sweet; nor sweet, bitter; darkness, light; nor light, darkness. It will not accept the false, the impure, the wrong, for it is the God in man which ever is, and ever must be, true and holy and right. So it was

that the teaching of Scribes and Pharisees never really influenced the masses of the people; for it was concerned with the externals of matter and form, and they wanted the living truth. So it has been that systems of error have had their day, but have had no principle of life, because they were not the voice of God speaking to the heart of man; and in so far as they have lived at all, it has been because the error has been but in the form, or has been in part only of the substance, which has also contained some germ of truth. So it has been in every age, and in every school of thought, that the men whom the sheep have heard have been men who have had in them the ring of the true, and have been as prophets uttering the voice of God. Witness Paul of Tarsus, and Francis of Assisi; Luther, and Savonarola; John Knox, and John Wesley; Charles Simeon, and John Keble.

**(9) By me if any man enter in.**—He returns to the thought of the door, through which every true shepherd must himself enter the fold. The thought is parallel to that of the "strait gate" and "narrow way," in Matt. vii. 13, 14, and with St. Paul's thought in Rom. v. 2, and Eph. ii. 18. No one can really enter the fold and become a shepherd of the flock who does not seek to do so through the character and life and death of Christ—*i.e.*, to devote himself in entire self-sacrifice to the sheep whom he seeks to lead: to live in unfailing prayer to and communion with God, whose the sheep are; to

shall go in and out, and find pasture. <sup>(10)</sup> The thief cometh not, but for to

steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and

find for himself as for them "the access through Christ Jesus by one Spirit unto the Father." We may not narrow the door to the fold, nor yet may we widen it. He is the Door. No shepherd may enter unless through Him.

**He shall be saved.**—The words refer primarily to the dangers without the fold from which he shall be delivered. (See the striking parallel in 1 Cor. iii. 15.) But in the wider thought they include the salvation from sin which is in this life to be realised, and is a necessary qualification for the pastor's work.

**And shall go in and out, and find pasture.**—The fold will ever be open to him who enters by the Door. He will have perfect freedom to enter, whenever storm or danger or night approaches. He will lead out and find pasture for His flock. In the devotion of his service, and in communion with God, he will daily have an increasing knowledge of truths new and old, and the truths which he learns he will give as food for the souls of men.

<sup>(10)</sup> **The thief cometh not, but for to steal.**—Comp. Notes on verses 1 and 8. The description of the thief is opposed to that of the shepherd, who constantly goes in and out and finds pasture. His visits are but rare, and when he comes it is but for his own selfish purposes, and for the ruin of the flock. Each detail of his cruel work is dwelt upon, to bring out

in all the baseness of its extent the corresponding spiritual truth.

**I am come that they might have life.**—More exactly, *I came that they might have life.* The pronoun should be emphasised. *I* came, as opposed to the thief. He does not further dwell upon the shepherd, but passes on to the thought of Himself, and thereby prepares the way for the thought of Himself as the Good Shepherd in the following verse. The object of His coming is the direct opposite of that of the thief, who comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy. He came once for all, that in Him the sheep may have life. (Comp. chap. vi. 50, 51.) The Sinaitic MS. inserts the word "eternal" here—"that they might have life eternal." The word is probably not part of the original text, and the thought is rather of the present spiritual life which every believer now hath, and which will issue in eternal life. But comp. Note on verse 28.

**And that they might have it more abundantly.**—Better, *and that they might have it abundantly.* The word "more" is an insertion of the English version without any authority, and it weakens the sense. It is not that a greater is compared with a less abundance, but that the abundance of life which results through Christ's coming is contrasted with the spiritual wants and death which He came to remove. This life is through Him given to men abundantly, overflowingly. We are reminded of the Shepherd-King's

that they might have it more abundantly. <sup>(11)</sup> I am the good shepherd: <sup>a</sup> the good shepherd giveth his

<sup>a</sup> Ist. 40.  
11; Eze.  
34. 23.

life for the sheep. <sup>(12)</sup> But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not,

Psalm singing of the "green pastures," and "waters of rest," and "prepared table," and "overflowing cup"; and carrying all this into the region of the spiritual life we come again to the opening words of this Gospel, "And of His fulness did we all receive, and grace for grace" . . . "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (chap. i. 16, 17).

**(11) I am the good shepherd.** —The central point of the allegory has now passed from the "Door," through the last verse as the connecting-link, to the "Good Shepherd." If we think that the whole discourse was suggested by a scene actually occurring (comp. Note on verse 1), then the prominence of an actual shepherd passing before them would suggest the turn which it now takes.

The word "good" means that which is fair, and is in a physical sense that which is in its own nature excellent, and in a moral sense that which is beautiful and noble. St. John uses the word only in chap. ii. 10, of the "good wine," and in this chapter here and in verses 14, 32, and 33. (Comp. Luke viii. 15.) The passage of the Old Testament referred to above has prepared our minds for this thought of Christ, especially Ps. xxiii.; Isa. xl. 11; Ezek. xxxiv. 11—16, 23; xxxvii. 24. He is the Shepherd who is ideally good, fulfilling every thought of guidance, support, self-sacrifice that had ever gathered round the shepherd's name. No image of Christ has so deeply impressed

itself upon the mind of the Church as this has. We find it in the earliest Christian literature, as in Tertullian (*Works*, vol. i. p. 371, in *Ante-Nicene Library*), or Clement of Alexandria (*Works*, vol. i., pp. 149, 462, A.N. Lib.) We find it in the very earliest efforts of Christian art, in painting, embroidery, and even statuary. (See Kugler's *Handbook, Italian Schools*, Lady Eastlake's Trans., 4th Ed., pp. 5 and 6.) It comes to us naturally in our hymns and prayers. The pastoral staff is the fit emblem of the Bishop's work, and the pastor is the name by which the humble way-side flock thinks of him who in Christ's name is appointed to be their guide.

**Giveth his life for the sheep.** —This was true of the actual shepherds, of whose devoted bravery many instances are told. A striking one is that of David himself, who rescued the lamb of his father's flock from the mouth of the lion and the bear (1 Sam. xvii. 34—37). That self-sacrifice that would lead the shepherd to risk his own life for that of his flock has its ideal fulfilment in Him who is the Good Shepherd, and will give His life for mankind. The words rendered "giveth His life," should be almost certainly *layeth down His life*. They are found only in St. John's writings. The other passages are verses 15, 17, 18; chaps. xiii. 37, 38; xv. 13; 1 John iii. 16 (twice).

**(12) But he that is an hire-**

seeth the wolf coming,  
and leaveth the sheep, and  
fleeth: and the wolf catch-

eth them, and scattereth  
the sheep. <sup>(13)</sup> The hireling  
fleeth, because he is an

ling.—The Greek word occurs again in the New Testament only in the next verse and in Mark i. 20. It implies a lower position than the household servant, and is more nearly what we should call the tramp-labourer. The thought follows from that of the good shepherd who in the time of danger will give his own life for the sheep. The hireling has no interest in the sheep, and cares for them only as far as to secure his own hire. This want of interest is strongly expressed in the double statement, “not the shepherd,” “whose own the sheep are not.” In the interpretation we are not to think of the hierarchy, who have been already, in verse 8, designated as “thieves and robbers,” breaking into the fold, but of all persons who from any other motive than love for humanity, and by any other way than the door which is Christ, or by any other call than that of the Holy Spirit, take upon themselves the office of shepherds of the flock. The hour of danger will distinguish between the shepherd and the hireling. The one, loving the sheep, will give even his life for them. The other, caring only for the hire, in whatever form it comes, will flee and leave the sheep as a prey to the wolf.

**And the wolf catcheth them and scattereth the sheep.**—The words “the sheep” are not found in the majority of the better MSS., and their insertion makes the sentence awkward, because the pronoun “them” has been imme-

diate before used for the same sheep. Adopting the better reading (see Note on next verse), we have, *and the wolf catcheth them, and maketh havoc*—i.e., seizeth individual sheep, and maketh havoc in the flock. Under the general image we are to understand all the spiritual foes which destroy individual souls and rend the Church of Christ. The wolf is the natural enemy of the sheep, and the fit emblem of all evil persons, who are the natural enemies of the sheep of Christ’s fold. He spake of “false prophets” as “ravelling wolves” (Matt. vii. 15). He sent forth the Twelve “as sheep in the midst of wolves” (Matt. x. 16), and the Seventy, whose mission, we shall see (comp. Note on verse 22), was connected with the teaching of this chapter, “as lambs among wolves” (Luke x. 3). St. Paul foresaw that in the very city from which St. John wrote this Gospel, “after his departing, grievous wolves would enter in among them, not sparing the flock” (Acts xx. 29). These are the only passages in the New Testament where the word occurs, and from them we may gather that while wolves represent all false teachers and foes to truth, “*the wolf*” represents him who is the source from whence they come. As all shepherds are related to the Good Shepherd, so are all wolves to *the wolf* whose work they do.

**(13) The hireling fleeth.**—These words are again an addition to the text, and should be omitted with the great majority of the best

hireling, and careth not for the sheep. <sup>(14)</sup> I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine. <sup>(15)</sup> As the Father knoweth me,

even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>(16)</sup> And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they

authorities. If we omit them this verse must be immediately connected with that which precedes, the last clause of which is a parenthesis—"But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth (and the wolf catcheth them, and maketh havoc), because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep." The sense is not affected by the omission, and the words were apparently added as a gloss to make the meaning clear. The thought of the hireling is repeated to express the nature of the man, and to strengthen the contrast with the Good Shepherd which immediately follows.

<sup>(14)</sup> **And know my sheep, and am known of mine.**—Better, *And know those who are Mine, and those who are Mine know Me.* The thought of the Good Shepherd is repeated to show that it expresses the closest communion between the Shepherd and the sheep. It is not simply that the sheep know the Shepherd's voice, but they partake of His nature, and the solemn form in which He expresses this union is in likening it to that between His Father and Himself.

<sup>(15)</sup> **As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father.**—Better, . . . *and I know the Father.* Our version, by its rendering, and by the division of verses fails to give the full mean-

ing, and there is thus, indeed, no reason for the assertion of the mutual knowledge of the Father and the Son. But connecting the words with those of the previous verse, we have, "I am the Good Shepherd, and know *those who are Mine, and those who are mine know Me, even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father.*" This deeper sense of union between the human spirit and Himself, and the wondrous likening of it to the union of Himself and the Father, is present to His mind as the close of His work on earth draws near. We find it again in chaps. xiv. 20; xv. 10; xvii. 8, 21. It is bound up with the thought of the love which lays down His own life for them. This is repeated here and again in verses 17 and 18.

<sup>(16)</sup> **And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold.**—The words recall to the mind a question which the Jews had asked at this very feast, "Will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?" (chap. vii. 35). They asked it in the bitterness of scorn. He asserts that among the Gentiles—who are not of the Jewish fold—He already possesses sheep; just as He says to Paul concerning Corinth, "I have much people in this city" (Acts xviii. 10). The Old Testament prophets had foretold this coming of the Gentiles, as, e.g., Isa. lii. 13 *et seq.*; liii. 10 *et seq.*; Mic. iv. 2;

shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold,<sup>a</sup> and one shepherd. <sup>b</sup><sup>c</sup> There-

fore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life,<sup>b</sup> that I might take it

and it is present to our Lord's mind here as the result of His laying down His life for the sheep. (Comp. Notes on chaps. xi. 52 and xii. 32.)

Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice.—The bringing in of the Gentiles was in the Divine counsel part of the Messianic work which He must therefore needs do. It would result from His being lifted up that all men should be drawn unto Him, and would be accomplished in the mission-work of the Church. These scattered sheep shall hear His voice, for the conscience which knows the voice of God is the heritage of all men; they shall hear it, as the words seem to imply, while the sheep now in the fold refuse to follow it. (Comp. Matt. viii. 11 and Rom. xi. 17.)

And there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.—Better, *There shall become one flock, and one shepherd.* The word here rendered "fold," is quite distinct from that which occurs in verse 1, and in the earlier clause of this verse. It should be, beyond all doubt, rendered "flock"; but the reader may prove this for himself by comparing the only other passages where it is found in the New Testament—Matt. xxvi. 31; Luke ii. 8; 1 Cor. ix. 7 (twice). In each of these passages we have "flock"; but here our version has followed the Vulgate and the Great Bible in giving "fold," whereas both Tyndale and Coverdale had rightly given "flock." But even "flock"

and "shepherd" fail to catch the expressiveness of the Greek, where the words are closely allied, and of nearly the same sound. "There shall be one *poimē* and one *poimēn*." Luther's German can exactly render the verse. "Und Ich habe noch andere Schafe, die sind nicht aus diesem *Stalle*. Und dieselben muss Ich herführen, und sie werden meine Stimme hören, und wird eine *Herde* und ein *Hirte* werden."

It is not uniformity which is promised, but unity. The distinction is not merely one of words, but upon it depends a wide and important truth. It is not unity of fold which is regarded as the future of the Church, but unity of flock. There will be many folds, in many nations, in many ages, in many climes. But for all Christians there will be one true Shepherd who layeth down His life for the sheep; and all these differing folds shall, through living unity with Him, make one vast flock.

(17) Therefore doth my Father love me . . . —For the meaning of this difficult verse, comp. Notes on chap. v. 17 *et seq.*, and see Phil. ii. 8, 9. The thought is that in the relation between the Father and the human nature of Christ, the reason of the Father's love is based upon the self-devotion of the Son. He who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to die for it, loves the Son who of His own will gives Himself to die. It is, if we might presume so to speak, as though the salvation of mankind had called

again. <sup>(18)</sup> No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and

<sup>a</sup> Acts 2.  
24.

I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.<sup>a</sup>

forth a new relation of love between the Father and the Son.

**That I might take it again.**—This is given as part of the reason of the Father's love; and the words admit of no other construction. At first sight they seem to us paradoxical, beyond and against common feeling. In acts of sacrifice, the fact that that which is lost will be certainly regained seems to us to take away all value from the act; but here the fact that Christ will lay down His life is stated to be in order that he may take it again; and this is the foundation of the Father's love! The key to the meaning is in the truth that for Christ the taking again of human life is itself a further sacrifice, and that this is necessary for the completion of the Great Shepherd's work. The scattered sheep during the whole of the world's existence are to be gathered in by Him whose continued union with human nature makes Him at once the Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep, and the Door by whom we ever have access to the Father.

**(18) No man taketh it from me.**—It is better to leave the words in the greater width of the Greek, *No one taketh it from Me*; for it may be, indeed, that even the Father is included in the thought. The laying down of the life is absolutely self determined, and therefore it is the reason of the Father's love. Up to the very last moments of life, He lays stress on

the perfectly voluntary nature of His death. "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit; and having said thus, He gave up the ghost." (See Luke xxiii. 46.)

**I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.**—The words apply also to the human nature of our Lord, and the "power" spoken of is the authority derived from the Father. It is of His own will that He lays down His life and takes it again; but this, as the whole of the life of the Son, is in moral subordination to the Father. (Comp. Notes on chaps. v. 19 and xix. 10.) Hence it is that He speaks of taking His life again, while the general language of the New Testament speaks of His being raised by the Father. The taking again was under the Father's authority, and was therefore itself the Father's gift. (Comp. 1 Pet. iii. 19.)

**This commandment have I received of my Father.**—Better, *did I receive*; pointing, probably, to the commission at the time of the Incarnation. He has asserted in fullest terms the entirely voluntary nature of His one sacrifice. He repeats in fullest terms the voluntary subordination of Son to Father, which is based upon equality of nature. Not only was the authority by which He would die and rise again derived from the Father; but

(19) There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.

(20) And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?

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—

(21) Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

(22) And it was at Jeru-

both these acts were included in the decree which gave to Him the Messianic work. We should be on our guard against the mistake which is often made of understanding this commandment of the laying down the life only; it clearly extends also to the taking it again.

(19) There was a division therefore again . . . —The words carry us back to those of chap. ix. 16, where a like division was noted.

**Among the Jews.**—The Pharisees are mentioned before, and they are the persons who have been present all through this discourse. (Comp. chap. ix. 40.) The wider word is here, and in chap. ix. 18, applied to them. They were identifying themselves with, and becoming leaders of, the party who were the enemies of Christ. (Comp. Note on chap. i. 19.)

(20) **He hath a devil, and is mad.**—Comp. Note on chap. viii. 48. The words "and is mad" are explanatory of the possession by a demon.

(21) **Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil.**—We trace here again the presence of the better party among the Sanhedrin, which we found before (chap. ix. 16). "His words," they would say, "are words of calm teaching. The possession by a demon disorders, frenzies, makes the slave of mad-

ness. It is inconsistent with words like these."

**Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?**—“Surely a devil cannot open the eyes of the blind?” is the form their question took. They go back from the teaching to the great sign which gave rise to it; and they find that work and word are alike opposed to the thought of being the result of a demon’s presence. Such a miracle had never before been known. A demon does not give the power to do a prophet’s work. (See Notes on chap. ix. 16, and comp. Matt. xii. 24.)

(22) Between the last verse and this there is an interval of time which may be roughly taken as two months. Wieseler has calculated that the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles was on October 19, and the Feast of the Dedication on December 20. (See *Chron. Synops.*, Eng. Trans., p. 435; and comp. Note on chap. vii. 2.) In this interval we may with great probability place the events and teaching contained in Luke x. 1—xiii. 21, with the parallels in St. Matthew. (Comp. Luke x. 1.) The connection suggests several points of interest:—

(1) At the Feast of Tabernacles there was a practice, one of those which witnessed to a feeling wider than that of those who acted in it, of offering up seventy oxen for the seventy nations of the world, the

salem the feast of the dedi- | <sup>a 1 Macc. 4.59.</sup> | cation,<sup>a</sup> and it was winter.

number being taken partly from the list in Genesis, and partly from a vague idea of its sanctity. The number seventy was thus brought before the people with the recognition of the heathen world as within the hope of salvation; and the minds of men were prepared for the mission of the Seventy, which followed at no long interval.

(2) Verse 16 of this chapter finds the commencement of its fulfilment in this mission. The appointment of a new body of disciples, whose very number is symbolical of a wider work, was the first step in the bringing in of the "other sheep." The Twelve answered to the number of the tribes of Israel; but the Seventy represent the nations of the world. The directions for this work to each body are nearly identical, but the restrictions laid upon the Twelve are not laid upon the Seventy.

(3) The reference in Luke x. 3 to the wolves among whom they would be as lambs, throws light upon verse 12. He who would lay down His life for them, would expose them to the wolves because He as the Good Shepherd would save them from the wolf.

**And it was at Jerusalem.—***Better, And the Feast of the Dedication was being held at Jerusalem.*—Although St. John gives no hint that our Lord had left the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, this specific mention of the city implies a return from a distance, for the words would be out of place if He had continued there during the interval since verse 21. They cannot be restricted to the feast, which was not confined to Jeru-

salem, but was universally observed by the Jews.

The reference in the margin warns us against the error of understanding "the Feast of the Dedication" as a feast in honour of the dedication of Solomon's or Zerubbabel's temple. We know of no annual festival connected with these dedications, and the statement that this feast was "in the winter" makes it almost certain that it was the feast instituted, b.c. 164, by Judas Maccabaeus, in commemoration of the cleansing of the Temple after its profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes (1 Macc. iv. 52—59). It extended over eight days, beginning on the 25th of the month Kislev, which answers to parts of our November and December. It is still called "Chanuca," the Dedication, while St. John's Greek name for it, which was adopted by the Vulgate (*Encænia*), is familiar to English ears in connection with another commemoration. In this, as in other rejoicings, illumination was a prominent feature, and it was sometimes called the "Feast of Lights." The Temple and private houses were illuminated, and it was customary in the houses of the more wealthy and pious Jews to have a light for each member of the family, increasing by an additional light for each evening of the feast. The illumination has been sometimes traced to the discovery in the temple, by the Maccabees, of a vial of oil sealed with the high priest's ring. This, it is said, was sufficient for the lamps for one evening only, but was miraculously multiplied so as to suffice for eight evenings, which

(23) And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. (24) Then came the

Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to

were therefore devoted to annual illuminations in remembrance of this gift of God (*Talmud, Shabbath 21b*).

**And it was winter.**—Better, *It was winter.* These words should then be connected with the following verse. Our division breaks the sense.

(23) **And Jesus walked in the temple . . .**—Better, *and Jesus was walking.* The scene is remembered and pictured as it took place.

**In Solomon's porch.**—The place is mentioned again in Acts iii. 11 and v. 12. It was rather a cloister or arcade than what we usually call a porch. It is said to have been on the east of the Temple, and to have been a relic of the original building which had survived all destructions and restorations, and had brought down its founder's name from its founder's time. (Comp. Jos. *Ant. xx.* 9, § 7.) It does not seem clear, however, that Josephus calls anything more than the eastern wall by the name of Solomon, and he calls the cloister above it simply the "Eastern cloister." It is more likely that the true position of "Solomon's porch" is to be found in one of the subterranean structures which existed in the time of our Lord, and exist now, as they did in the time of Solomon. Caspari would identify the corridor under *El-Aksa* with "Solomon's porch," and thus connect the place where our Lord walked at this feast with the Holy Church of Zion, and the

place of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. (*Chron. and Geogr. Introd.*, Append. § 22; Eng. Trans. pp. 297—9.) The place as mentioned here is another instance of the writer's remembrance of topographical details connected with the Temple. (Comp. chap. viii. 20.) The fact that it was winter, and the fact that He was walking in this covered cloister or crypt, explain each other.

(24) **Then came the Jews round about him.**—The words mean literally, they *encircled Him.* It is again the impression of one who saw what he records. He remembers how they stood in a circle round our Lord, and watched Him with eager eyes as they asked their question.

**How long dost thou make us to doubt?**—Literally, *How long dost Thou lift up our souls?* or, as the margin, "How long dost Thou keep us in suspense?" The words exactly express what was probably the real state of fluctuation, in which many of these Jews then were. They do not in the true sense "believe" (verses 25, 26), and they soon pass to the other extreme of seeking to stone Him (verse 31); but in many of them the last miracle, and the words accompanying it, had left a conviction that He was more than human, and not possessed by a demon. (See Note on verse 21.) Two months have passed away, not, we may believe, without many an earnest thought and much anxious weighing of evidence concerning

doubt?<sup>1</sup> If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.  
<sup>(25)</sup> Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed

<sup>1</sup> Or, hold us in suspense,

not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. <sup>(26)</sup> But ye believe not, because ye

Him. And now the Feast of Dedication has come, and what thoughts have come with it? It is the Feast of Lights, and He had declared Himself the Light of the world. It is the Feast of Freedom, telling how the Maccabees had freed their nation from the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes, and He has declared that "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (chap. viii. 36). It is the feast which commemorates the cleansing of the Temple, and His first public appearance in the Temple was to cleanse it, and claim it as His Father's house. May there not be, then, a close connection between the statement that "it was the Feast of the Dedication," and the question, "How long dost thou excite our souls?" Was He, the question would seem to ask, really the Messiah or not? though by the Messiah they mean only a temporal prince. Was He, like the Judas of whom they were thinking, raised up as a deliverer from the Roman power, to give them the freedom which had long been the national dream?

If thou be the Christ, tell us.—Comp. Luke xxii. 67.

<sup>(25)</sup> I told you, and ye believed not.—Better, and ye believe not, as all the best MSS. Here, as in chap. viii. 25, where a similar direct question was put to Him, the answer is indirect. It could not be otherwise. Their misconception of the Messianic work had made the very word

Messiah an impossible one for Him to utter to them. To have said He was the Messiah would have been to sanction their thought of Him as a temporal prince; to have said that He was not would have been to contradict the essential truth. He refers them, then, to His earlier words and deeds in proof of what He was. To inquirers of simpler hearts, as the woman of Samaria and the man born blind, He had used the word Messiah. To them He had again and again told the same truth, though the actual word had never crossed His lips while speaking to them.

The works that I do in my Father's name.—Comp. Note on chap. v. 36. This appeal to His works, and the assertion that they were done in His *Father's* name, is itself an answer in word and in deed that He was the Messiah.

<sup>(26)</sup> But ye believe not.—Comp. Notes on verses 5, 14, 16.

As I said unto you.—These words are not found in the Sinaitic or Vatican MSS., and are omitted by the best modern editors. They are not, however, without considerable authority, and the fact of their difficulty may have led to their omission. They are sometimes joined to the following verse, and some expositors accept this as their probable meaning; but although the preceding clause of verse 26 was not actually spoken in the previous discourse, it was implied, and the reference is of a like kind to that of the Messiah in

are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. <sup>(27)</sup> My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they

follow me. <sup>(28)</sup> and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck

verse 25. There is no real difficulty in the fact that He thus refers them to a discourse uttered two months before. In continuity of teaching from Him to them it immediately preceded, and at the commencement of this discourse He gathers up the thread of that which had gone before. On the other hand, the interval helps us to understand how He refers to a truth which was taught them, rather than to the actual words in which He taught it.

(27, 28) The reference to those who believe not because they were not of His sheep, introduces the contrast between them and those who were, and the position of the true members of the flock is expanded in this pair of parallel clauses. One member of each pair refers to the act or state of the sheep; and the other to the act or gift of the Shepherd. The pairs proceed in a climax from the first response of the conscience which recognises the divine voice, to the eternal home which is in the Father's presence.

- (1) "My sheep hear My voice," . . . "and I know them,"
- (2) "And they follow Me:" . . . "and I give unto them eternal life;"
- (3) "And they shall never perish," . . . "neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."

By reading successively the clauses printed in the ordinary type, we trace the progress of

the human act and state; by reading, in the same way, the clauses printed in italics, we trace the progress of the divine gift; by reading each pair in the order of the text, we see how at each stage the gift is proportioned to the faculty which can receive it.

The earlier clauses are familiar to us from the preceding discourse, but some expressions will need a word of explanation.

**Eternal life.**—Comp. verse 10, where the word "eternal" is added in some readings. Here the verb is in the present, "I give (am now giving) them." (Comp. chaps. iii. 15; v. 24; vi. 47 *et seq.*). We cannot be too careful to observe that our Lord's thoughts of "eternal life" is never of the future only. It is a development, rather than a simply future existence. We shall live eternally, because we now live spiritually in communion with the Spirit who is Eternal.

**And they shall never perish.**—Comp. Notes on chap. viii. 51, and xi. 25, 26. The negative is in the strongest form—"They shall by no means perish for ever."

**Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.**—Better (comp. verse 18), *and none shall pluck them . . .* The words should not be limited by the insertion of the word "man." They are to be taken as including every spiritual foe; all thieves and robbers

them out of my hand.  
 (29) My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all ; and no man is able

to pluck them out of my Father's hand. (30) I and my Father are one. (31) Then the Jews took up stones

that would break into the fold ; all wolves that would rend the flock ; the adversary who "as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour." (Comp. especially for the full thought of no separation from Christ, Rom. viii. 38, 39.) The words "out of My hand" express alike the strength which protects, and guidance which leads, and comfort which cherishes. (See Isa. xl. 11.) Out of this hand none shall pluck. Yet we are to bear in mind that the sheep itself may wander from the Shepherd's care, and that all the fulness of these promises depends upon the human will, which is included in the first clause, "My sheep hear My voice . . . and they follow Me."

(29) **My Father, which gave them me** (better, *hath given them Me*), **is greater than all.**—For the thought that they are given by the Father, comp. Note on chap. vi. 37. Here our version has rightly made no limiting addition to "all" (comp. last verse). In the width of the word, which extends to every creature and to every power, and even to the Son in His subordination to the Father, the Father is thought of as greater than all. Again the thought mounts with each succeeding sentence : (1) "None shall pluck them out of My hand ;" (2) "They are My Father's gifts, and He is greater than all ;" (3) "None shall pluck them out of My Father's hand."

(30) **I and my Father are one.**—The last clause of verse 29 is

identical with the last clause of verse 28 if we identify "Father's" with "My." This our Lord now formally does. The last verses have told of power greater than all ; and these words are an assertion that in the infinity of All-mighty Power the Son is one with the Father. They are more than this, for the Greek word for "one" is neuter, and the thought is not, therefore, of unity of person, but is of unity of essence. "The Son is of one substance with the Father." In the plural "are" there is the assertion of distinctness as against Sabellianism, and in the "one" there is the assertion of co-ordination as against Arianism. At recurring periods in the history of exegesis, men have tried to establish that these words do not imply more than unity of will between the Father and the Son. We have seen above that they assert both oneness of power and oneness of nature ; but the best answer to all attempts to attach any meaning lower than that of the divinity of our Lord to these His words is found here, as in the parallel instance in chap. viii. 58, 59, in the conduct of the Jews themselves. To them the words conveyed but one meaning, and they sought to punish by stoning what seemed to them to be blasphemy. Their reason is here given in express words, "because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God" (verse 33).

(31) **Then the Jews took up stones again.**—Better, *The Jews*

again to stone him. (32) Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? (33) The Jews an-

swered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. (34) Jesus answered

*therefore . . .* Their action follows as an effect caused by His words. The word "again" reminds us that they had done this two months before, at the Feast of Tabernacles (viii. 59). The words for "took up" are not the same. There the sense is, "they lifted up stones," and we are told that Jesus hid Himself; here the meaning is, "they carried stones," there being none in the cloister where they were. During this process their first burst of anger expended itself, and our Lord further disarms it with a question.

(32) **Jesus answered them.**—*i.e.*, answered the thought which He read in their hearts, and the intention which was expressed by their act.

**Many good works have I shewed you from my Father.**—For the idea of "good" expressed here, comp. Note on verse 14. We have no better word in English; but "excellent," "distinguished," approach the sense. It is not the nature of the works as beneficent that is made prominent, but their moral excellence. They are works from the Father manifested in the visible world by the Son. (Comp. Notes on chap. v. 19, 20.) Jesus speaks of "many" such works. John has recorded but few, but he has given hints that many more were done (chaps. ii. 23, iii. 2, v. 36), and he afterwards expressly asserts this (chap. xx. 30).

**For which of those works do ye stone me?**—Again there is a fulness of meaning in the Greek which it is difficult to convey in translation. The word rendered "which" marks, not simple distinction, but quality. (Comp. "What kind of commandment," Matt. xxii. 36.) "What is the character," our Lord would ask, "of that one of these works on account of which ye are about to stone Me?" If they had thought out this question, they must have been led to see that the quality of the works proved that they were from God, and that therefore He by whom they had been wrought was also from God. This thought of the quality of the works had been in the minds of some of them (chap. ix. 16). Its true issue would have been to worship Him as God; they are preparing to stone Him as a blasphemer.

(33) **The Jews answered him.**—Comp., for the thoughts of this verse, Notes on verse 30 and on chap. v. 18.

**For a good work . . . but for blasphemy.**—The word rendered "for" is not the causal "on account of," which we have in the last verse; but "concerning"—the technical form for an indictment. For the Mosaic law of blasphemy, see Lev. xxix. 10—16.

(34) **Is it not written in your law?**—Comp. Note on chap. viii. 17. The passage here quoted is in

them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? <sup>a</sup> <sup>(35)</sup> If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 82.  
6.

scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because

Ps. lxxxii. 6, but the term "Law" is here used in a wide sense for the whole of the Old Testament. There are other examples of this usage in chaps. vii. 49, xii. 34, and xv. 25; Rom. iii. 19; 1 Cor. xiv. 21.

I said, Ye are gods?—In the Hebrew of the Psalm, as in the Greek here, the pronoun is emphatic. "I myself said, Ye are gods?" The words are probably to be understood in the Psalm as spoken by God, who sits in judgment on the judges whom He had appointed, and gives the name of "gods" (*Elohim*) as representing Himself. See Ex. iv. 16; vii. 1; xviii. 15; xxi. 6; xxii. 8, 28; Deut. i. 17; 1 Sam. xxviii. 13; Pss. viii. 5 and xlvi. 6; and comp. Perowne's Notes on Ps. lxxxii., and article "God," in Kitto's *Biblical Cyclopædia*, Ed. 3, vol. ii., p. 144 *et seq.*

(35) If he called them gods.—The argument is another example of Hillel's famous *First Canon of Interpretation*—that the greater may be inferred from the less. (Comp. Note on chap. vii. 23.) The pronoun "he" (*He*) refers probably to God (see Note on verse 34), or the rendering may be "it," as referring to "law"—*i.e.*, the Psalm.

Unto whom the word of God came.—*i.e.*, the word declaring "Ye are gods," and pointing back to the time indicated by "I said," when each one was set apart to be a representative of God, and therefore had His authority to bear also His name.

The Scripture cannot be broken.—More literally, *cannot be loosened*. Comp. Matt. v. 18, 19, and for the word rendered "broken" see also in this Gospel chaps. v. 18 and vii. 23.

(36) Whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world.—Better, *Whom the Father sanctified, and sent into the world*. The tense refers to the time of His consecration to His Messianic work, and to the Incarnation, which was the commencement of it.

Because I said, I am the Son of God.—He had not said this in express words, but, as we have seen, it is directly implied in verses 29 and 30, and the Jews had so understood what He said (verse 33).

So far, then, the argument is simply a technical one, such as formed the staple of those customary in Rabbinic schools, and based on the letter of the Scriptures. The law (Psalm) applied the term "Elohim" (gods) to men representing God; no word of that Scripture could fail to hold good; how much more, therefore (*a minori ad majus*), could the term Son of God be applied to Him who was not a man consecrated to any earthly office, but consecrated by God, and sent into the world to represent God to man. (Comp. Note on chap. i. 18.) Their charge of blasphemy is, on their own principles, without the shadow of foundation. But in these words

I said, I am the Son of God? <sup>(37)</sup> If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. <sup>(38)</sup> But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that

ye may know, and believe, that the Father *is* in me, and I in him. <sup>(39)</sup> Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand.

there is a deeper meaning than this technical one. When we speak of "men representing God," we are already in thought foreshadowing the central truth of the Incarnation. Priests who offered sacrifices for sins, and kings who ruled God's people, and prophets who told forth God's will, were consecrated to their holy office because there was the divine in them which could truly be called "god." Every holy life was in its degree a type of the Incarnate life of the Son of God. But He was the ideally true Priest sacrificing Himself for the world, the ideally true Prophet declaring God's will in its fulness, the ideally true King ruling in righteousness. Every holy life was as a ray of the divine glory manifest in human flesh, but all these rays were centred in the nimbus of glory which rested as a crown on the head of Jesus Christ.

<sup>(37)</sup> **If I do not the works of my Father.**—He has met the charge of blasphemy on technical grounds. In this and the following verse He advances from that defence to the ultimate test. Whether He is a blasphemer or not depends upon whether He represents God or not, and to prove this He appeals again to the works. Are they or are they not the works of the Father? (verse 32; comp. chaps. v. 17, 36; ix. 3; xiv. 10).

<sup>(38)</sup> **But if I do, though ye**

**believe not me, believe the works.**—A higher faith would have believed Him. Had they truly known their own spiritual needs, and truly known the meaning of that great truth He had taught, they would have found in Him the true satisfaction of the mind's cravings, and the faculty of faith would have rested in the object of its existence. For all this the Old Testament had been a preparation; but their minds had not been prepared by it. He will take therefore their own lower ground, and appeal to the sight of those who have not faith. (Comp. Note on chap. xx. 29.) Let them test the works, think of their character, as some of them had already done (chap. ix. 16), and see at least that these are of the Father.

**That ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me.**—The more probable text is, *that ye may perceive, and may (permanently) know that the Father is in Me . . .* Failing the intuitive faith-knowledge, He appeals to the intellectual perception, which is not immediate, but from which they may ascend to that knowledge, and may then really know that such works can be only of the Father; and that, therefore, the Father is present in Him who does them, and that He who does them is one with the Father (verse 30).

<sup>(39)</sup> **Therefore they sought again to take him.**—He has

(40) And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he

abode. (41) And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake

removed all ground for the charge of blasphemy, and they have abandoned the attempt to stone Him, though He here repeats the very truth which led to that attempt before (verses 30, 31). The word "again" refers to previous attempts to take Him (chap. vii. 30, 32, 44.)

**But he escaped out of their hand.**—Nothing is said of the manner, and there is no reason to suppose anything more than, while they were plotting how they might take Him, He passed out of the Temple. (Comp. chap. viii. 59.)

(40) **And went away again beyond Jordan.**—Comp. Note on chap. i. 28. In Matt. xix. 1 we have the fuller expression, "the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan," referring to the same locality. The whole of Judaea proper was Cis-Jordanic, and the "Judah upon Jordan" (Josh. xix. 34) was the boundary "toward the sun-rising" of the tribe of Naphtali—i.e., it answered to what was afterwards known as Gaulonitis, and is now known as the *Jolan*. Josephus (*Wars* iii. 3) expressly enumerates Gaulonitis as belonging to Judaea in the time of our Lord. For the explanation of this spread of the name, which has always been a geographical crux, see v.c. Raumer's argument in Dr. Caspari's summary (*Chron. and Geogr., Introd.*, Eng. Trans., p. 90). We have to think, then, probably, of Bethania or *Tellanihje*, to the north of the Sea of Galilee, on the eastern side of the

Jordan, as the place of our Lord's retirement. He had taught the Jews by divine words, and they had sought to stone Him (verse 31, and chap. viii. 59). He had appealed to divine works, and they had attempted to take Him by force (verse 39, and chap. vii. 30, 32, 44). He sees in all this the darkness which foreshadows the night, and he retires from the city to visit it no more until the final Passover, when the night will be at hand. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

**And there he abode.**—How long we have no means of judging. The time from Dedication to Passover (December to April) is divided, by the visit to Bethany near Jerusalem, and the raising of Lazarus, into two parts of uncertain duration, one of which is spent in Gaulonitis and the other in Ephraim (chap. xi. 54).

(41) **And many resorted unto him.**—It is one of the key-notes of this Gospel, struck in its opening words (see Note on chap. i. 5), and recurring at frequent intervals, that in the midst of even the deepest darkness the light is never absent. In contrast with the rejection at Jerusalem there is the reception on the old ground, which brings memories of early days and bright hopes, which are not

of this man were true.  
<sup>(42)</sup> And many believed on him there.

A.D. 33.

CHAPTER XI.—  
<sup>(1)</sup> Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of

without their fulfilment now. The mission of the Seventy, and Christ's own work in Galilee before the Feast of the Dedication (comp. Note on verse 22), accounts for the number who now come to Him.

**And said, John did no miracle: but all things . . .**—Better, as before, *John did no sign* . . . This was said to Him, but was a general remark suggested by the associations of the spot. The remark assigns to John the position as a witness which he claimed for himself, and which the Evangelist has made prominent in the narrative of His work. He did no sign, and therefore came short of the glory of Him whose signs they had seen and heard of; but more than any other he had recognised that glory, and directed men to it. His spiritual intuition, in advance of the generation in which he lived, was itself a sign, and all things which he had said about the Messiah had, in the events which had taken place since they had seen Him in that place before, been proved to be true. The witness of the past is linked to that of the present. The enthusiasm which John had kindled still burns.

**(42) And many believed on him there.**—The word “there” is, in the best texts, in a position of emphasis. “And *there* many believed on Him.” It marks the contrast between the rejection in Jerusalem and the reception at Bethania.

## XI.

[<sup>(3)</sup> LIFE, TRUTH, LIGHT, AND LOVE MORE FULLY MANIFESTED. CORRESPONDING INCREASE OF THE UNBELIEF OF THE JEWS (chaps. xi. 1—xii. 50):

- (a) *Lazarus restored to life* (chap. xi. 1—46).
- (a) The journey to Bethany. Sleep and death (verses 1—16).
- (b) The interview with Martha. The Resurrection and the Life (verses 17—27).
- (c) The interview with Mary. Sorrow and love (verses 28—38).
- (d) The open sepulchre. The corruptible and incorruption (verses 39—46).]

**(1) Now a certain man was sick.**—This is connected with the preceding narrative to introduce the reason for our Lord's leaving His retirement to go again into the neighbourhood of Jerusalem.

**Named Lazarus, of Bethany.**—For the name “Lazarus” (the Greek form of Eleazar, “God is the helper”), comp. Luke xvi. 20, where it occurs as the solitary instance of a name in our Lord's parables. The parable was closely connected with the miracle in order of time. It is in every way probable that the form in which the truths of the world beyond the grave there took shape was suggested by the incidents which are

Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

<sup>(2)</sup> (It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment,<sup>a</sup> and wiped his

<sup>a</sup> Matt.  
26.7.

feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)  
<sup>(3)</sup> Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou

here recorded. It has been suggested that this Lazarus may have been identical with the young man that had great possessions (Matt. xix. 16 *et seq.*), and the induction rests upon an enumeration of instances which makes it at least likely in a high degree.

"Bethany," too, is familiar to us from the earlier Gospels (Matt. xxi. 17; xxvi. 6; Mark xi. 12; xiv. 3; Luke xix. 29; xxiv. 50). The modern name, *El-Azirieh*, or *El-Lazirieh*, connects it with the events of this chapter, being formed from *El-Azir*, the Arabic form of the name Lazarus. It is a poor village on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem (verse 18).

**The town of Mary and her sister Martha.**—Better, *the village . . .* (Comp. Luke x. 38.) This is the general meaning of the Greek word, which is distinguished from that for "city" or "town," as in Matt. ix. 35, x. 11; but John uses it in chap. vii. 42 for Bethlehem. For the relative position of Mary and Martha comp. Luke x. 38–42. The younger sister is here mentioned first as the better known from the events related in verse 2. Lazarus was probably younger than his sisters (chap. xii. 2). The village was known, then, in the circles of the first disciples, as the village of Mary and Martha, by way of distinction from the "Bethany beyond Jordan"; and the distinction is marked here on

account of the paragraph at the end of the preceding chapter. (See chap. i. 28.)

**(2) It was that Mary which anointed the Lord.**—Comp. Matt. xxvi. 6 *et seq.*, and Mark xiv. 3 *et seq.* John himself relates the anointing in chap xii. 3 *et seq.* Here he simply mentions it as distinguishing Mary from others of the same name, and assumes it as a well-known incident which had been, as Christ declared it should be, "told for a memorial of her wheresoever the gospel had been preached" (Matt. xxvi. 13). Still, the other Evangelists had not told the name, and St. John, when the name first occurs in his narrative, connects it with the person whose deed of love was known to all.

There is no sufficient reason for identifying Mary of Bethany with the "woman which was a sinner" (see Luke vii. 37 *et seq.*), or for identifying either with Mary Magdalene.

This verse should not be placed in parenthesis, as in our version. It is immediately connected with the verse which precedes, as well as with that which follows.

**(3) Therefore his sisters sent unto him.**—Better, *The sisters therefore sent unto Him*—i.e., because of the fact of the illness, which has been repeated at the close of the last verse, and also because of the intimacy between our Lord and this family, of which

lovest is sick. <sup>(4)</sup> When Jesus heard *that*, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of

God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby <sup>(5)</sup> Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister,

the anointing was a proof. (Comp. verse 5.)

**Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.**—The words are given in the touching simplicity of the message just as they were sent by the sorrowing sisters. They feel that the sad news needs no addition, and that there is no necessity for a prayer for help. Weakness, conscious of strength which loves, needs but to utter itself. (Comp. verse 21.)

**(4) When Jesus heard that, he said.**—These words are not simply an answer sent to the sisters, but the uttered thought which arose in our Lord's mind as He heard that Lazarus was ill; and were spoken in the presence of the disciples who were with Him, and doubtless in that of the messengers also.

**This sickness is not unto death**—*i.e.*, “will not issue in death: will not have death as its final result.” (Comp. verses 11 and 14, and chap. viii. 5.)

**But for the glory of God.**—*i.e.*, “the furtherance and accomplishment of the glory of God.”

**That the Son of God might be glorified thereby.**—This furtherance of the glory of God with the purpose of glorifying the Son carries us back, as all the expositors note, to the oneness of the work of the Father and Son which has been made prominent in our Lord's words. (Comp. chap. x. 38, and references in Note there.) But the words seem to carry us for-

wards as well as backwards. In the next chapter (verse 23) our Lord says, “The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified,” and the reference is to His death. Is that thought absent from the words here? The sickness of Lazarus would not indeed issue in death, though it would end in what men call death, and would be the immediate cause leading to the death of the Son of Man. The one would be as a sleep from which he would awake, the other should be the glorifying the Son of God, which would issue in the life of the world.

“Thereby” is probably to be interpreted “by means of the illness,” not “by means of the glory.”

This verse should be compared with chap. ix. 3. Here, as there, part of the meaning is that the glory of God would be effected in the person of him upon whom the miracle would be wrought. It was a spiritual crisis in the case of the man born blind. It cannot have been otherwise in the case of Lazarus.

**(5) Now Jesus loved Martha.**—It is not easy to see the connection of this verse with that which precedes, or with that which immediately follows. The fact of His abiding two days where He was, seems indeed opposed to the thought of His special love for the family. The most probable explanation is that which connects verses 5, 6, and 7 together, and

and Lazarus. <sup>(6)</sup> When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. <sup>(7)</sup> Then after that saith he to his

disciples, Let us go into Judæa again. <sup>(8)</sup> His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? <sup>(9)</sup> Jesus

makes the love the motive for going into Judæa again.

The word rendered "love" here is different from that in verse 3. There the word signifies the love of tender affection; here the word means the love of chosen friendship. (Comp. chaps. xx. 2 and xxi. 15 *et seq.*) The difference here is not to be explained, as it frequently has been, by the difference in the persons who were the objects of the love; but by the difference of the persons whose words we read. In the language of the sisters, whose hearts are moved by the brother's illness, the word of fullest emotion is natural. In the language of the Evangelist the other word is no less so.

It will be observed that in this verse, as in verse 19 *et seq.*, Martha takes the first place as the elder sister.

<sup>(6)</sup> When he had heard therefore.—Better, *When He heard therefore . . .*

**He abode two days still.**—It is usual to explain this delay as caused by His wish to test the faith of the sisters, or by the nature of the work which he was then doing, and was unwilling to leave. But the first reason passes over the fact that their faith had been shown in their message to Him; and the second postulates His presence at Bethany as necessary for the restoration of Lazarus. (Comp. chap. iv. 49, 50.) A juster view is that

which remembers the principle which He had taught at the first miracle (chap. ii. 4), that the hours of His work were marked out by signs that He alone could read, but that every hour had its work, and every work its hour. (Comp. verses 4 and 9, and chap. ix. 3, 4.)

A comparison with verse 11 makes it certain that Lazarus was dead before they set out for Judæa, but he was living when the words of verse 4 were spoken. The fact of death may have determined the hour of their departure.

**(7) Let us go into Judæa again.**—He does not mark out the place more definitely, and the word "again" recalls the dangers from which they had escaped at the close of their last visit to Jerusalem.

**(8) Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee.**—Better, *Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone Thee.* (Comp. Notes on chaps. i. 39 and x. 31.) They think of the danger to Him, and are not without thought of the danger to themselves (verse 16). It shews that the hatred of the Jews had now made it unsafe for our Lord and His disciples to be within their reach. The impression we derive from this verse is that the retirement into Gaulonitis had been of no long duration, when the message from Bethany came to interrupt it.

**(9) Are there not twelve**

answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. <sup>(10)</sup> But

if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. <sup>(11)</sup> These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus

hours in the day?—Or more exactly, *Are not the hours of the day twelve?* They had expressed their fears that danger and death would be the result of going into Judæa. His answer would say that the darkness of the night which they dreaded could not come yet. The natural night would come not until its appointed hour, until the twelve hours of the day had run their course. The day of His life is marked out by limits no less sure. The night indeed cometh, but it is as yet full day, and in that day He and they must do the work which is appointed of the Father. (Comp. verse 6; and Notes on chaps. ii. 4; vii. 30; viii. 20; ix. 4; xii. 27; xvii. 1.)

Incidentally these words bear on the question of St. John's method of counting the hours of the day, and support the view which from other passages seems quite evident that he follows the ordinary Babylonian numeration. (Comp. Notes on chaps. i. 40; iv. 6, 52; xix. 14.)

Because he seeth the light of this world—*i.e.*, the natural light of the sun. While the earth is illumined by it, men follow the course of their work without danger of stumbling. In the application to their own position, the truth holds good. The day of His work is illumined by the light of heaven, and for Him and them there is safety.

<sup>(10)</sup> But if a man walk in the night . . .—He passes in this verse from the material to the spiritual truth. This first clause still holds of the natural night, and the danger to men who walk in it; but it holds, too, of the darkness in which men walk who do not see, as He is seeing, the light of heaven falling upon the moral path. In the second clause the moral truth is expressed with a prominence which excludes the other.

Because there is no light in him.—The light is now not that “of this world,” but that which is within man.

<sup>(11)</sup> Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.—Better, *Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep.* They had probably understood the words of verse 4 to express that the illness was not mortal, and that Lazarus would recover. They have seen, therefore, no reason for facing the danger of Judæa (verse 7 and 8). He now supplies that reason, and for the first time speaks of going to the family at Bethany.

His words “our friend” gently remind them that Lazarus was their friend as well as His, for they as well as He had probably been welcome guests in the well-known house.

The fact of our Lord's knowledge of the death of Lazarus is stated by St. John without any explanation. From his point of view it could need none. He who needed

sleepeth ; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. <sup>(12)</sup> Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. <sup>(13)</sup> Howbeit

Jesus spake of his death : but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. <sup>(14)</sup> Then said Jesus unto them plainly,

not that any should testify of man, because of His own self-knowledge of what was in man (chap. ii. 25), needed not that any should testify of what had passed in the chamber of His friend.

For the idea of sleep as the image of death, see Note on chap. viii. 51, and comp. Matt ix. 24, and 1 Thess. iv. 14. It is not unfrequent in other passages of both the Old and New Testaments, and, from the time of Homer downwards, poets have spoken of sleep and death as twin-sisters.

<sup>(12)</sup> Then said his disciples. Better, *Therefore . . .* Their remark immediately arises out of what our Lord has said. They are glad to catch at any reason for not going to Judæa.

**If he sleep, he shall do well.** —More exactly, *If he be fallen asleep, he shall be saved.* There could be, therefore, no reason for His going, as the disease had passed the crisis. Sleep is given by the Rabbis as one of six favourable symptoms, and that it is so is a common-place in authors of all periods. From the apparent suddenness of the attack, and rapidity of the progress of the disease, it would seem to have been the “great fever” which was common in Palestine (comp. chap. iv. 52, and especially Luke iv. 38), and in which sleep would be the sign that the fever had ceased.

<sup>(13)</sup> They thought that he had spoken of taking of rest

in sleep.—These words forbid the thought that they really understood that Lazarus was dead, but did not wish to seem to know it. Three of them, indeed, had heard our Lord apply the word “sleep” to death before (Matt. ix. 24), but this instance of misunderstanding on their part takes its place with others of a like kind, as showing that the surface-meaning of words was that which naturally suggested itself to them. (Comp. Matt. xvi. 6—12, and Luke xxii. 38.) It is not likely that all “the three” were present during this interview. If it took place at Tellanihje, then the nearness of Bethsaida and the other towns of Galilee may have led some of the Twelve to visit their old homes. (Comp. chap. i. 28 and 48 *et seq.*) We can hardly imagine that Peter was present without taking a prominent part in the conversation, or that Thomas would have been in his presence the representative speaker (verse 16). His absence may be taken as one of the reasons why the account of the miracle which follows is absent from St. Mark’s Gospel, which is, like St. John’s, the Gospel of an eye-witness. (Comp. *Excursus F: The Omission of the Raising of Lazarus, in the Synoptic Gospels.*)

**(14) Lazarus is dead.** —The words of deeper truth, “Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep,” have conveyed no true meaning to their minds. He uses words, therefore, which fall short of that truth, but

Lazarus is dead <sup>(15)</sup> And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may

believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. <sup>(16)</sup> Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his

are the only words which they can understand.

<sup>(15)</sup> **And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there.**—The words are at first sound startling, as following immediately upon the plain statement, “Lazarus is dead.” The utterance is not of sorrow, but of joy; but the joy is not at the fact of death, but at the fact that He was not there. Had He been there, Lazarus would not have died (verses 21 and 32), and his recovery would have added to the work of healing. There is the assured consciousness of power over death itself, which sees as present all that is to follow, and sees in the strengthening of their faith ground for joy.

**To the intent ye may believe.**—They were already disciples, but this sign would be to them the vehicle of a higher spiritual truth, and the growth of their spiritual life would be such that it may be regarded as a new act of faith. (Comp. Note on chap. ii. 11.)

**Nevertheless let us go unto him.**—The thought of the final issue of the sleep brings the whole future before the mind. But for this, His presence is needed at Bethany, and He abruptly breaks off this conversation about it, by what is at once a resolution and a summons to go there.

<sup>(16)</sup> **Then (or, better, therefore) said Thomas, which is called Didymus.**—The second of these names is the Greek translation of the first, which is Hebrew. Both

mean “twin.” Both are found together again in chaps. xx. 24 and xxi. 2. Comp. the Catalogues of the Apostles in Matt. x. 3, Mark. iii. 18, Luke vi. 15, in all of which he is coupled with Matthew, whose twin-brother he possibly was; and in Acts i. 13, where he is coupled with Philip. The name belonged probably to his childhood, and we are wholly without the knowledge which can explain it. The various theories which attempt to do so, from the statement of the Apostolical Constitutions that he had a twin sister Lydia, to the view that the name was given by our Lord to signify his double or halting spiritual nature, are never more than, and are sometimes much less than, elaborate guesses. We may well believe that the name is due to the fact that he was a twin, but of whom it is of no importance that we should know, and it is quite certain that we cannot know.

And yet Peter, John, and Judas are the only Apostles whose characters we know as well. This is owing to three incidents preserved to us by St. John—the present passage, chap. xiv. 5, and chap. xx. 24 *et seq.* We have before us here a man looking at events from a mind full of the darkest apprehension. He is without hope that a return to Judaea can have any but one issue for his Master. The night is so clearly seen that the brightness of day is obscured. But with all this there is the full love

fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

(17) Then when Jesus came, he found that he had *lain* in the grave four

<sup>1</sup> That is,  
about  
two  
miles.

days already. (18) Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:<sup>1</sup> (19) and many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to com-

of a devoted disciple, who will follow his Master even unto death.

(17) Then when Jesus came —i.e., to the neighbourhood of Bethany. He did not at once enter the village itself (verses 20, 30).

**He found that he had lain in the grave four days already.**—The Jewish custom was to bury on the day of death. (Comp. Acts v. 6—10.) The whole tone of the narrative places the time of death at the point indicated by the summons to go into Judæa, in verse 7 (see Note there). Counting the parts of the days on which they set out and on which they arrived as included in the four days, in accordance with the Jewish method, we have two whole days and parts of two other days spent upon the journey. There is no indication that they halted on the way, but everything suggests rather that they went as quickly as possible. The common view, which supposes the place where John was baptising to have been on the southern Jordan, cannot be made consistent with this long journey; and it is usual to assume that Lazarus died on the day that the message reached the Lord, that after his death our Lord remained two days where He was, and that the fourth day was occupied on the journey to Bethany. It is believed that the meaning of the narrative is brought out more fully by the interpretation which has been followed above, and that

the four days for the journey is perfectly natural on the supposition which has been adopted, that the journey was from Tellanijje, which was north of the Sea of Galilee.

(18) **Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem.**—This way of speaking of places in the past tense is not found in the other Gospels. (Comp., in this Gospel, chaps. xviii. 1 and xix. 41; and, on the other hand, Note on chap. v. 2.) The explanation may be that from St. John's point of view, writing after the destruction of Jerusalem, the buildings and gardens could no longer be described as still existing.

**About fifteen furlongs off.**—The Greek stadium, which is here rendered “furlong” was  $606\frac{2}{3}$  English feet. The distance was, then, as the margin gives it, not much short of two English miles. This is mentioned to account for the fact stated in the following verse, that many of the Jews came to comfort Martha and Mary.

(19) **And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary.**—Better, *and many of the Jews had come . . .*—They had come before our Lord's arrival. The word “Jews” is to be understood in St. John's general sense (comp. Note on chap. i. 19) of those opposed to our Lord, who had lately sought to stone Him (chap. x. 31), and afterwards to take Him by force (chap. x. 39). The family at Bethany was

fort them concerning their brother. <sup>(20)</sup> Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him : but Mary

sat still in the house. <sup>(21)</sup> Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. <sup>(22)</sup> But I know,

one of position and substance (comp. Matt. xxvi. 6—13 ; Mark xiv. 3—9), and they would naturally have had many friends among the higher ranks of the Jews. Another reading, which has considerable authority, is “had come to the women with Martha and Mary,” or “to Martha and Mary and their friends.”

To comfort them concerning their brother.—The days of mourning were usually thirty, which were divided into (1) three days of weeping; (2) seven days of lamentation; (3) twenty days of sorrow. This fourth day after the death was the first of the seven days of lamentation. Lightfoot has collected, in a long note on this text, quotations from the Rabbis illustrating the mourning customs, and giving examples of the words used.

<sup>(20)</sup> Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming . . . —This is partly to be explained from the position in which they stood towards Him, and partly from the fact of the presence of the Jews at the house. She goes forth to meet Him in a place where she can speak her heart’s thoughts, apart from the oppressive ceremonial of the formal lamentation, and where He would not be exposed to a renewal of the attempts against His life.

But Mary sat still in the house.—Better, without the word in italics, but Mary was sitting in

the house. The characteristics of the two sisters, which we find in Luke x. 38, are strikingly preserved in this narrative. The clause describes precisely the position of the mourner, who sat on or near the ground, while those who came to lament with her sat around. (Comp. Job xix. 25.)

<sup>(21)</sup> Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.—We have exactly the same words spoken by Mary in verse 32. They are the utterance of the thought which had already been expressed in their message (verse 7), and had, we may think, been spoken more than once by the sisters to each other. These sisters are among the many who had received our Lord in the fulness of a true faith, of whom the Gospel narrative tells us nothing, or gives us, as here, but a passing glimpse. Their belief is stated in the definiteness of full conviction ; but they, like the courtier, connect the power to save with the bodily presence of our Lord. (Comp. chap. iv. 49.)

<sup>(22)</sup> But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God . . . —The words express a half-formed hope, which she dare not utter, perhaps dare not even think, that her brother may be restored to life again. She had heard probably of the young maid whose body was reanimated by the life which had but just left it (comp. Mark v. 35 et seq.; Luke viii. 41, 42), and of the young man

that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. (23) Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother

shall rise again. (24) Martha said unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last

whose body was being carried to the grave, when at His command it was restored living to the widowed mother. (Comp. Luke vii. 11 *et seq.*) Her brother had been the friend of Jesus; they had all trusted in His power and His love. Words had come to them from Him telling that this sickness should not issue in death, but that it should further God's glory and glorify the Son. And now He is Himself present. His words cannot fail, and He Himself cannot be there without a purpose. She dare not say more; but she rests in this, that there is unity of power and will between Him and the Father. Whatever He asks, God will give.

(23) **Thy brother shall rise again.**—These words, spoken as they were by our Lord after the purpose of His journey, as expressed in verse 11, and immediately before the accomplishment of it, cannot be taken to exclude the restoration of Lazarus to physical life. At the same time, the form of the words clearly point, as Martha understood them to point, to "the resurrection at the last day." They are chosen for this very purpose; to lead her from the passionate longing for her brother's restoration, and from a vague thought of the Lord's power and will to restore him, to a wider and truer conception of what life really is; and to a realisation of the truth that for a true believer in Him there can be no such thing as

death. This "sign," like every other, is to be no mere wonder, nor is it to be limited to our restored life. It is to lead to the spiritual truth which is signified; and is to be for them and for mankind the true conquest of death by Life.

(24) **I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection . . .**—Her answer expresses something of disappointment. Her whole heart had been fixed on one thought, and in all that had passed her hopes had found a support, which seemed to warrant the yet higher hope. She is now reminded of a general truth which she had rested in before, but this does not satisfy the expectation she had formed now. We have all felt something of her disappointment as we have stood beside the sepulchre. We have known, with a knowledge more full than hers, that "he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day;" but this knowledge has often had little power to remove the deep sorrow of the heart. We conquer the pagan thought "lost for ever"; but we are often conquered by the thought "lost for the present."

For the thought of the resurrection, see Notes on chap. v. 29 and comp. Luke xiv. 14. The Pharisees expected the resurrection of the just to accompany the Messianic advent. (Comp. Dan. xii. 2 and 2 Macc. vii. 9.) Still, the answer is in advance of that which we should expect, as compared with the dim-

day.<sup>a</sup> (25) Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life:<sup>b</sup> he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: (26) and whosoever

<sup>a</sup> Luke  
14. 14;  
ch. 5.  
20.  
<sup>b</sup> ch. 6.  
35.

liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? (27) She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God,

ness which rests upon even the fullest expression with regard to the resurrection in the Old Testament, and is to be traced to earlier lessons she had received from Him who is teaching her now.

(25) **I am the resurrection, and the life.**—She has spoken of the resurrection as a truth which she believes, and as an event in the far-off future, so remote from the present life indeed, as to be powerless to comfort her now. The two first words of His answer, expressed in the fulness of emphasis, teach her that the resurrection is to be thought of as His person, and that it is to be thought of as actually present. “*I*”—His words mean—“and none beside Me, am the Resurrection. I am the Resurrection—a present life, and not simply a life in the remoteness of the last day.” In the same sense in which He has declared Himself to be the Water of Life and the Bread of Life, supplying in Himself every need of spiritual thirst and spiritual hunger, He declares Himself to be the Resurrection, revealing in His own person all that men had ever thought and hoped of a future life, being Himself the power which shall raise them at the last day, and could therefore raise them now. This is because He is also “the Life,” and therefore every one in communion with Him shall live.

**He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.**—Better, *though he have died . . .* She thinks and speaks of Lazarus as dead. He asserts that in the true thought of the spiritual life the fact of physical death does not interrupt that life.

(26) **And whosoever liveth and believeth in me.**—This is to be understood of the physical life answering to “though he have died” of the last verse.

**Shall never die.**—Comp. especially Note on chap. viii. 51. *He shall by no means die for ever.* Not through the infinite course of ages shall there be that which makes for him the sting of death. The fact of what we call physical death is not denied; but in the fulness of the thought of life it is, regarded as the passage to a new and higher life.

(27) **She saith unto him, Yea, Lord.**—This is her assent to the question He asked. She believed all that He had told her. It is not that she expresses her belief, in answer to His question, in the remainder of this verse. The answer is simply “Yea, Lord.” Then she proceeds to give the foundation on which that answer rested.

**I believe that thou art the Christ.**—The word means, “I have believed, and do now;” “I have convinced myself, and do

which should come into the world. <sup>(28)</sup> And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. <sup>(29)</sup> As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly, and came unto him. <sup>(30)</sup> Now Jesus was not yet come into the

town, but was in that place where Martha met him. <sup>(31)</sup> The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. <sup>(32)</sup> Then when

believe." But this being so, convinced that He is the Messiah, she has in that conviction the ground for believing all that He has now taught her of Resurrection and Life.

<sup>(28)</sup> **And called Mary her sister secretly.**—It was done secretly to avoid attracting the notice of the Jews who were with her (verses 19, 31). This, we have seen (verse 20), accounts for the fact that our Lord did not Himself go to the house. That the care was not unnecessary is seen from verse 46.

**The Master is come** (better, *is here*), and calleth for thee.—The word here rendered "Master" is not the Hebrew Rabbi (comp. Note on chap. i. 38), but the Greek word answering to our "Teacher." (Comp. chap. xiii. 13, 14.) He is not named, but Mary at once knows who is intended. (Comp. Mark xiv. 14.) Perhaps the name was that by which they usually spoke of Him who had been their Teacher. We are not told that our Lord sent for Mary, but we must assume that Martha conveyed the message which she herself had heard.

<sup>(29)</sup> **She arose quickly.**—She

was sitting in the house (verse 20), after the manner of mourners. The news she now hears tells her that their true Comforter was at hand, and she at once goes forth to meet Him.

<sup>(30)</sup> **Now Jesus was not yet come into the town.**—Better, as before, *into the village* (verse 1).

**Where Martha met him.**—Comp. verse 20.

<sup>(31)</sup> **And comforted her.**—Better, *were comforting her*—i.e., were engaged in the prescribed ceremonial of those who were called comforters.

**Saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.**—The better reading is, *thinking, She goeth . . .* The practice was and is common among the Orientals, as well as among other nations.

Their following her defeats the object Martha had in view in calling her secretly. We may say, also, that it defeated our Lord's object in remaining outside the village; but this is not inconsistent with His knowing that it would be so.

<sup>(32)</sup> **Lord, if though hadst been here.**—The words are precisely the same as those which

Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my

brother had not died.  
<sup>(33)</sup> When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned

Martha had uttered (verse 21). She adds no more. It may be that she was prevented doing so by the presence of the Jews; but the next verse suggests rather that her emotion was too powerful for words, and that the only possible language was that of a suppliant lying at His feet and weeping.

**(33) He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.**—The word rendered “groaned” occurs, besides in this verse and verse 38, three times in the New Testament; in Matthew ix. 30 (“and Jesus straitly charged them”); Mark i. 43 (“and He straitly charged him”); and xiv. 5 (“and they murmured against her”). The original meaning of the word is “to snort, as of horses.” Passing to the moral sense, it expresses disturbance of the mind—vehement agitation. This may express itself in sharp admonition, in words of anger against a person, or in a physical shudder, answering to the intensity of the emotion. In each of the passages of the earlier Gospels the word is accompanied by an object upon which the feeling is directed. In the present context it does not go beyond the subject of the feeling. Here it is “in the spirit” (comp. chap. xiii. 21); and in verse 38 it is “in Himself.” Both mean the same thing; and point to the inner moral depth of His righteous indignation; the object of it, however, is not expressed.

For the rendering “and was troubled” the margin gives, as the exact force of the Greek, “and He troubled Himself”; and this is to be preferred. These words do not express the inner emotion; for that has been expressed in the strong words which have gone before. They point rather to the physical movement which accompanied the emotion, and made known to others the indignation which was excited in His own spirit. The force of the whole sentence would require, in English, some such rendering as “He was indignant in the spirit, and caused Himself to shudder.”

Very different views have been put forth as to the cause of this intensity of emotion in our Lord. The cause supplied by the text is that He saw Mary lying at His feet weeping; and the Jews also weeping which came with her. Real sorrow, which calls forth all His sympathy, is accompanied by the mockery of sorrow, which can shed tears for the brother, whom they afterwards seek to kill (chap. xii. 10)! These Jews are those who had sought to stone their Teacher, and had resolved to cut off from all religious and social intercourse every one who acknowledged Him as the Messiah! With hearts full of hatred they can profess to be comforters, and can mingle their tears with hers. The severest words that fell from the lips of Christ were those which denounced the hypocrisy of priests, Pharisees,

in the spirit, and was troubled,<sup>1</sup> <sup>(34)</sup> and said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. <sup>(35)</sup> Jesus wept. <sup>(36)</sup> Then said the

<sup>1</sup> Gr. he troubled himself.

a ch. 9. 6.

Jews, Behold how he loved him! <sup>(37)</sup> And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind,<sup>a</sup> have caused that even this man

and scribes. It is this hypocrisy which now stirs in His spirit an anger so intense that it causes nerve and muscle and limb to tremble beneath its force.

<sup>(34)</sup> **Where have ye laid him?**—The question is directed, of course, to the sisters. This is further shown by the answer, “Lord, come and see.” Both question and answer are expressed in the shortest form. Grief speaks in the fewest possible words.

<sup>(35)</sup> **Jesus wept.**—The word is different from that which is used to express weeping in verse 33; but this latter is used of our Lord in Luke xix. 41. The present word means not the cry of lamentation, nor the wail of excessive grief, but the calm shedding of tears. They are on the way to the sepulchre, near to which they have now arrived. He is conscious of the power which He is about to exercise, and that the first result will be the glory of God (verse 4); but He is conscious also of the suffering hearts near Him, and the sympathy with human sorrow is no less part of His nature than the union with divine strength. Men have wondered to find in the Gospel which opens with the express declaration of the divinity of our Lord, and at a moment when that divinity was about to receive its fullest manifestation, these words, which point them still to human weakness. But

the central thought of St. John’s Gospel is “The Word was made flesh,” and He is for us the Resurrection and the Life, because He has been manifested to us, not as an abstraction which the intellect only could receive, but as a person, living a human life, and knowing its sorrows, whom the heart can grasp and love. A “God in tears” has provoked the smile of the stoic and the scorn of the unbeliever; but Christianity is not a gospel of self-sufficiency, and its message is not merely to the human intellect. It is salvation for the whole man and for every man; and the sorrowing heart of humanity has never seen more clearly the divinity of the Son of Man than when it has seen His glory shining through His human tears.

<sup>(36)</sup> **Then said the Jews**—i.e., part of them. (See the next verse.) The term “Jews” is repeated with a frequency (verses 31 and 33) which makes prominent their hostile position.

**Behold how he loved him!**—Or, more exactly, *how He used to love him*. The word used is the strong word for love which the sisters had themselves used in verse 3. “How He must have loved him,” they think, “during his life, if He thus sheds tears for him after his death!”

<sup>(37)</sup> **And some of them said**.—Better, *But some of them said*—i.e., another party of the Jews,

should not have died ?  
 (38) Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon

it. (39) Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh :

differing from those mentioned in the last verse.

**Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind . . . ?**—They refer to the greatest miracle which had taken place within the limits of their own knowledge. The other miracle of raising the dead they must have heard of, but had not believed. What they think of here is not raising the dead, but the possibility of preventing death; and their question is meant to imply that He could not have prevented this death. If He could, surely He would have done so for one whom He had loved, and would have come at once, instead of waiting until death had taken place. The inference they would draw is that, after all, the present failure is a proof that He did not open the eyes of the blind.

(38) **Jesus therefore again groaning in himself.**—See Note on verse 33. Their evil thoughts, expressed in verse 37, are the cause of this new emotion of anger.

**Cometh to the grave.**—Comp. verse 31. Here, as there, it would be better to render it *sepulchre*. The same word occurs again in chaps. xii. 17; xix. 41, 42; xx. 1–11.

**It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.**—The sepulchres were dug in the rock, either vertically, with an entrance from above, or horizontally, with an entrance

from the side, and were frequently adaptations of natural caves. (Comp. Matt. xxvii. 60; and Luke xi. 44.) Such sepulchres remain to the present day, and travellers are shown one which is said to be that of Lazarus. The entrance is from above it by twenty-six steps; and this must have been so, if we press the words “lay upon it.” The original words, however, may certainly apply to the horizontal slab which closes the entrance to the sepulchre; and the identification of this particular sepulchre is to be received with caution. The fact of the body being laid in a sepulchre, agrees with the general tone of the narrative that the family was one of substance.

(39) **Martha, the sister of him that was dead.**—This fact of close relationship is mentioned again to account for her remark. We know, from the whole narrative, that she was his sister; but this verse would say, not simply that Martha spoke, but that that in Martha which was sister to him who was dead spoke. She thinks that the form of him she loved has now passed to corruption; she cannot bear that her own eyes or the eyes of others should see it.

**For he hath been dead four days.**—The word “dead” is not expressed in the Greek, which says literally, *for he hath been of the fourth day*; and the thought is rather of the sepulchre than of death—“for he hath been in the

for he hath been *dead* four days. <sup>(40)</sup> Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? <sup>(41)</sup> Then

they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me

sepulchre four days." (Comp. verse 17.) The body had been embalmed (verse 44); but the manner of the Jews was to embalm only with spice, and to wrap in linen clothes (chap. xix. 40—42), and there is no evidence that they at any time followed the Egyptian method of embalming. The only instance of Jewish embalming mentioned in the Old Testament is that of Asa (2 Chron. xvi. 14).

The fact that the body had been in the sepulchre four days is given by the sister as a proof that decomposition must have taken place, and expositors have generally assumed that it was so. This is, however, not stated in the text, and the assumption is opposed by the fact that there was an interval during which the sepulchre was open, and Jesus prayed to the Father (verses 41, 42).

<sup>(40)</sup> If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God.—He takes her back to the promise which she had heard from the messengers (verse 4), and which had led to her brightest hopes, and reminds her too of His own teaching and her own faith (verses 21—27). Her last remark had more of the human and less of the divine than was contained in her earliest words (verse 22). Then her faith had reached "whatsoever Thou shalt ask"; and later she had accepted the truth, "He that believeth in Me, though he have died,

yet shall he live." "Let her hold fast to this faith," His words would now say, in a gentleness that is yet not wholly without rebuke, "and she shall see the glory of God." By this more is meant than the restoration of Lazarus to physical life. That was seen by those who did not believe; for her it should be a sign, teaching that He is the Resurrection and the Life.

<sup>(41)</sup> Then they took away the stone.—This could be done without difficulty, for it would be nothing more than a rough slab placed at the entrance of the cave, to prevent the approach of jackals or other beasts of prey.

From the place where the dead was laid is omitted by all the better MSS. It is an unnecessary gloss, to explain what stone is meant.

And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said . . .—His attitude, as well as His words, is meant to express that the work which He is about to do, is one of the works from His Father.

I thank thee that thou hast heard me.—Better, *I thank Thee that Thou didst hear Me*; the time referred to being that of the offering of the prayer. Of this we have no notice. It was the will of the Son expressing itself in moral harmony with the will of the Father. "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me" (chap. v. 30; comp. chap.

(<sup>42</sup>) And I knew that thou hearest me always : but because of the people which stand by I said it,

that they may believe that thou hast sent me. (<sup>43</sup>) And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud

xii. 27, 28), and therefore in the expression receiving the answer. The promise of verse 4 was the utterance of the divine will to the disciples and the messengers, and we are, it may be, to think of that moment as the time of its realisation by the Son.

This thanksgiving for the answer to His prayer has been uttered aloud in the presence of the multitude. The verse which follows was spoken to prevent a misunderstanding on the part of the disciples and in all times.

(<sup>42</sup>) **And I knew that thou hearest me always.**—The meaning depends upon the emphatic position of the pronoun, “I, for My part, knew.” “It is not for My own sake that I speak these words.” This union of the will of the Father and the Son, by which every prayer of the Son was an expression of the will of the Father, and every work of the Father was in harmony with the will of the Son, was not exceptional, but the law of His human life. There is ever the consciousness, “I and My Father are one” (chap. x. 29).

**But because of the people which stand by I said it.**—Better, *because of the multitude*. He had before instructed the disciples and the sisters. He would instruct the multitude also, so that to them this “miracle” may be more than a wonder, and may teach them that He is sent of God. (Comp. Notes on chaps. ix. 29, 31; x. 21.)

That which He said must be the words “I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me.” Some have referred them to the words of verse 4, but this is in itself improbable, and is besides excluded by the reference to the multitude.

**That they may believe that thou hast sent me.**—The pronoun is again emphatic. His words mean “That *Thou* and none beside Thee.” They had ascribed the sight given to the blind to deceit, or the work of a demon. This sign is preceded by a thanksgiving to the God of heaven in the presence of them all. It is a solemn appeal, proving His divinity at once by the confidence in which He utters it, and by the answer which Heaven gives to it.

(<sup>43</sup>) **He cried with a loud voice.**—Comp. chap. v. 25, 28, and Notes there. These verses lead to the opinion that it was at the moment of the cry, and not before, as some have thought, that life returned. This is the only passage where the word rendered “cried” is used of our Lord. (Comp. Matt. xii. 19.) It occurs again in this Gospel in chaps. xii. 13; xviii. 40; xix. 6, 12, 50.

**Lazarus, come forth.**—He addresses him as we should address a friend whom we wished to arouse from sleep, by his name, the most familiar of all sounds, and marking his personality. (Comp. chap. xx. 16.) Literally, the Greek means, *Lazarus, Hither, out!* and contains no verb. There is a fitness in them

voice, Lazarus, come forth.

(44) And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes : and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them,

Loose him, and let him go.

(45) Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. (46) But some of

as addressed to one already lying in the sepulchre. Comp. "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise" (Luke vii. 15), and "Maid, arise" (Luke viii. 54).

(44) **And he that was dead came forth.**—“Wonder at a wonder within a wonder!” is Basil’s comment on these words; and many of the older expositors regard the power to move, when bound hand and foot, as itself a miracle. But this seems not to be necessary, and if not necessary, is not to be resorted to. (Comp. Note on chap. vi. 21.) The grave-clothes may have been bound round the limbs separately, as in the Egyptian mummies, and this would not prevent motion ; or (and this is more probable) the body may have been “wrapped in a linen cloth,” which encompassed the whole, except the head (Matt. xxvii. 59), but still left motion possible. The word rendered “grave-clothes” is used nowhere in the New Testament except in this passage. It means properly the bands or straps by which the linen sheet was fastened to the body, and which kept the spice from falling out. (Comp. chap. xix. 40.) We find it used elsewhere for straps and thongs generally. They were made of rushes, linen, and other materials. The word is used once in the Greek of the Old Testament, where it means the

belts by which beds are girded (Prov. vii. 16).

**And his face was bound about with a napkin.**—For the word “napkin” comp. Luke xix. 20. It means here the cloth placed round the forehead and under the chin, but probably not covering the face.

**Loose him, and let him go.**—This command is in itself strong proof that the earlier part of the verse is not to be interpreted as a narrative of miraculous incidents.

(45) **Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen . . .**—Better, *Many therefore of the Jews, which had come to Mary and seen . . .* The comma should be placed after the word *Jews*. The Greek cannot mean, “Then many of the Jews, i.e., of those which came to Mary.” It must mean, “Many therefore of the Jews, i.e., all those which had come to Mary.” The miracle is so utterly beyond all their conceptions that it carries conviction to every heart, and leaves no further possibility of doubt. They are called those “which had come to Mary,” because they had remained with her after Martha had gone to meet our Lord, and had followed her when she herself went.

(46) **But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees**—i.e., necessarily, some of those

them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

(47) Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth

who had been with Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, and had believed. But why did they then go and tell the Pharisees? It is contrary to their position as believers to think that they did this as informers against Jesus. What they have seen has carried conviction to their own minds, and they report it to the Pharisees, either as a proof that He really was the Messiah, or in any case to demand from them a judgment on the facts which they report.

[(3) LIFE, TRUTH, LIGHT, AND LOVE MORE FULLY MANIFESTED. CORRESPONDING INCREASE OF THE UNBELIEF OF THE JEWS (*continued*).]

(b) *The council of the Jews.*  
The decree of death against the Giver of life (verses 47—53).

(c) *The withdrawal to Ephraim.*  
Many seek for Jesus (verses 54—57).

(d) *The supper at Bethany.*  
Mary, Judas, the chief priests (love, selfishness, hatred) (chap. xii. 1—11).

(e) *The entry into Jerusalem.*  
The King and His people (verses 12—19).

(f) *The wider kingdom* (verses 20—36).

Certain Greeks would see Jesus. The firstfruits of the West (verses 20—22).

*The seed and the harvest.*

Life in death (verses 23—26).

The world-wide attraction of the Cross. Light in darkness (verses 27—36).

(g) *The final issue of the unbelief of the Jews.*

(a) The writer's own judgment (verses 37—43):  
On no-faith (verses 37—41);  
On half-faith (verses 42, 43).

(b) The judgment of Jesus (verses 44—50).  
The rejection of light (verse 46); love ("that I might save the world," verse 47); truth (verse 49); life (verse 50).]

(47) Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council.—Matters have reached too serious a stage for them to allow further delay. Opponents have become believers; enemies have become friends; and there are men of their own rank, and men with whom they had taken council against Him, who have now believed. The Pharisees go in their difficulty to the chief priests, who were for the most part Sadducees, and they together summon a meeting of the Sanhedrin.

**What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.** — The note of interrogation may be placed in the middle or at the end of the clause. The latter suits better the

many miracles. <sup>(48)</sup> If we let him thus alone, all men

will believe on him : and the Romans shall come

energy of their language. "What do we, seeing that this Man doeth many miracles?" They accept the testimony of the Jews who have come to them, and cannot longer throw doubt upon His miracles. The question is asked in the present tense; it is not a matter for future action. "What are we doing seeing what this Man is doing?" They feel that they have been inactive but too long, while He has been daily gaining influence. The form of their question is a strange contradiction; they cannot but admit that He doeth many signs, and yet their pride will call Him by no name but the contemptuous "this Man!"

**(48) If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him.**—He who but a short time since had escaped from their stones and violence, and had retired to Bethany, was now within two miles of Jerusalem. One work had carried conviction to the minds of all who had seen it, though many of them were of their own party. Another such miracle in the city itself would carry conviction, they think, to the minds of all.

**And the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.**—The dread of the Roman power must have been constantly present to the Jews of that generation. They had seen Archelaus deposed, and a Roman procurator had come to carry into effect the enrolment decreed by Augustus (Luke ii. 1). Pontius Pilate had suppressed outbreaks by violence in the Temple itself. There had been tumults in connection

with the Corban money and with Barabbas. The Temple mountain was the site of the Roman fortress Antonia, and this dread power may at any moment destroy the national life, which only existed on sufferance.

The attempts to prove that "our place" can mean "the Temple" must now be given up; and if we attach a local meaning to the word we must understand it of Jerusalem. It may, however, be questioned, whether the word has any local signification here. Like our words "standing," and "place," and "position," it certainly may have a moral sense, and New Testament examples of this usage are frequent. (See Acts i. 25; xxv. 16; Rom. xv. 23; 1 Cor. xiv. 16; Heb. xii. 17.) It is suggested that this sense is more in harmony with the feeling of the Pharisees. They possessed no local power; and the city could not be taken away from them more entirely than it already was. Their existence as rulers depended upon the Mosaic law and upon the services of the Temple. Round these centres they had gathered human tradition and ordinance, to which they clung because they only could interpret them, and they only could use the vast powers which were thus exercised over men. The Law had become practically an intricate system of tradition, and the Temple-service had become practically an intricate system of ritual. With this the Roman empire, following its usual policy, had not interfered, and the Jewish hierarchy had become the centre and the rulers of the national life. But in direct

and take away both our place and nation. <sup>(49)</sup> And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, ye know nothing at all, <sup>(50)</sup> nor consider that it is

<sup>a ch. 18.</sup>  
expedient for us, <sup>a</sup> that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. <sup>(51)</sup> And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied

opposition to both of them, had been the work and teaching of Christ. He had sought to establish for law and service the simplicity of their first spiritual principles. His spiritual teaching was a cutting to the very root of their whole being. If all the people believed on Him their *raison d'être* would be gone, and the Romans would no longer suffer an *imperium in imperio*, which they now allowed because it swayed the masses of the people. They would take both their position, and with it the rank which they still claimed as a nation.

The emphatic position of the word "our" should be noted, and also that "place and nation" are linked together as one complex thought attached to it.

<sup>(49)</sup> **And one of them, named Caiaphas.**—Comp. Matt. xxvi. 3; Luke iii. 2. His proper name was Joseph, and the name Caiaphas is the Syraic form of Cephas. He, like Peter, took the name of "Rock-man," as a title to indicate his work! For the succession of high priests at this time, see Jos. *Ant.* xviii. 2, § 2. Caiaphas himself was priest from A.D. 26—36.

**Being the high priest that same year.**—The words occur again in verse 51 and in chap. xviii. 13. They are used with a solemnity of meaning to express "that fatal and decisive year."

**Ye know nothing at all.**—There had probably been various suggestions made by different members of the Sanhedrin which seemed to him to miss the mark, or to fall short of the one means which would have a successful issue.

<sup>(50)</sup> **Nor consider that it is expedient for us . . .**—This remarkable counsel has linked itself in St. John's thoughts with the name of Caiaphas. He quotes it again in chap. xviii. 51.

**Should die for the people, and that the whole nation . .**

—Different words are used here in the Greek as in the English. The former word represents the theocratic people, those who were united together as the servants of God; the latter word is that which is used in verse 48, and represents the political nation as one of the nations of the earth.

<sup>(51)</sup> **And this spake he not of himself.**—There is a moral beauty in the words in spite of the diabolical intent with which they are uttered; and St. John adds the explanation that they had an origin higher than him who spake them. Writing after the events, he has seen them fulfilled, and regards them as an unconscious prophecy. Like another Balaam, Caiaphas was the oracle of God in spite of himself, and there is in his

that Jesus should die for that nation ; <sup>(52)</sup> and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. <sup>(53)</sup> Then from

that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. <sup>(54)</sup> Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews ; but went thence unto a country near to the wilder-

words a meaning far beyond any that he had intended.

Being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation.—He stood, therefore, in a relation which made him the official representative of God to the people, and gave him an official capacity to convey God's truth. This was represented in the days of Samuel by the Urim and Thummim ; and John, himself a Jew, still thinks of the high priest's breast as bearing the oracle which declared the will of God, whatever unworthy human thoughts may have filled the heart beneath. It may be that another reference to the high priest's office is present in these thrice-written words. It was the high-priest's duty to "enter within the veil," and "make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year" (Lev. xvi.). In that year the veil was rent, and the first step taken by which the holy place was destroyed, and the high priest's office ceased to exist. With the destruction of the holy place the Jewish day of Atonement lost its significance, but the high priest that year, by his counsel and action in the Sanhedrin, was causing the sacrifice which should be presented by another high priest, in the Holy of Holies, as an Atonement for the

world—"Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. ix. 11, 12).

**(52) And not for that nation only.**—Caiaphas had said "die for the people," using the word which meant the people of the Jews. St. John said, "die for that nation," using the wider word which meant the nation as one of the nations of the earth. He now passes to a wider meaning still. He ~~had~~ lived to see a partial fulfilment of the ingathering of the "other sheep" of chap. x. 16, and he thinks of that death as for God's children in all nations, who shall be one flock under one Shepherd.

**(53) Then from that day forth they took counsel . . .**—On that day, then, the Sanhedrin officially decreed His death. The remaining question was how they could carry out this decree without exciting a popular tumult, or bringing themselves into collision with the Romans. (Comp. Matt. xxvi. 4.)

**(54) Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews.**—He had heard of the de-

ness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

(55) And the Jews' pass-

over was nigh at hand : and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to

cree of the Sanhedrin which had been publicly made known (verse 57), and therefore avoided persons who would have carried it into effect.

"The Jews" are, as before, the hostile party. The passage is a good illustration of St. John's use of the term, for He was of course among Jews, in the ordinary meaning of the word, during the sojourn at Ephraim. (Comp. Note on chap. i. 19.)

**But went thence unto a country near to the wilderness.**—All the better MSS. read "unto the country . . ." as in contrast to the city, Jerusalem, where "the Jews" dwelt. He went from Bethany, when He had heard of what had taken place at Jerusalem, "into the country." This is further defined as "near to the wilderness," and then the name of the city is given.

**Into a city called Ephraim.**—The position of this "city" is not known. The MSS. spell it variously as *Ephraim*, *Ephrem*, *Ephram*, and *Ephratha*. Eusebius and Jerome both assumed it to be the same place as Ephron, but differed as to its position; the former fixing it at eight, and the latter at twenty miles, north-east from Jerusalem. Both would place it, therefore in Judaea; and this agrees with its position "near to the wilderness," for the desert of Judaea extended nearly as far as Jericho. In 2 Chron. xiii. 19, we have an Ephrain or Ephron (ac-

cording to the written text and the LXX.) in connection with the neighbourhood of Bethel. This is mentioned by Josephus (*Wars*, iv. 9, § 9), and is near to the wilderness of Bethaven. It is possibly the place named here; but a Jew would naturally use the phrase, "the wilderness," to mean the desert of Judaea. Dr. Robinson would identify Ephraim and Ephron with Ophrah (Josh. xviii. 23, 1 Sam. xvii. 23), and fix the locality at the modern *et-Tayibeh*, four or five miles east from Bethel, and sixteen from Jerusalem, which would agree roughly with the position assigned by Jerome. We must be content to leave the matter in this uncertainty. (Comp. Lake xvii. 11.)

(55) **And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand.**—Comp. Notes on chaps. ii. 18, and vi. 4.

**Out of the country.**—Not the country near Ephraim, but the country generally, as opposed to the city.

**To purify themselves.**—The Law ordained no special purifications before the Passover, but on the general principle of ceremonial cleanness, a large number of pilgrims would necessarily go up before the feast to observe the legal rites and offer the required sacrifices. The time required varied from one to six days. (Comp. Gen. xxxv. 2; Ex. xix. 10, 11; Num. ix. 10; 2 Chron. xxx. 17, 18; chap. xviii. 28 (Note); and Acts xxi. 24, 26; xxiv. 18.)

purify themselves. <sup>(56)</sup> Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast? <sup>(57)</sup> Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should

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shew it, that they might take him.

## CHAPTER XII.—

<sup>(1)</sup> Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. <sup>(2)</sup> There they made him a supper; and Martha

<sup>(56)</sup> Then sought they for Jesus, and spake . . . —The words imply a continuance of seeking and speaking. They describe the scene as it took place day after day as they stood in the Temple courts. They had heard rumours of recent events in the various parts from which they had come. Many of them had seen and heard Him at earlier feasts at Jerusalem, and they wonder whether He will come to the Passover, or whether the decree of the Jews will deter Him.

What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?—The words contain two questions: *What think ye?* *That He will not come to the feast?* He has not been seen in any of the caravans, and the place of His retirement is not known to them. They ask the question one of another; but the tone of doubt is prevalent.

<sup>(57)</sup> Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees.—If the word rendered “both” is regarded as part of the text, it would connect this verse with the fact that the people sought for Jesus—“They on the one hand sought and asked questions about

Him; but besides this, the chief priests and the Pharisees had given commandment . . . ” But the great majority of the best MSS. omit the word, and we must therefore read, *Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given commandment . . .* The words are an explanation of their question—“Will He come in the face of this commandment?” Their resolve to take Him has been arrived at as the result of their counsel (verse 53).

## XII.

<sup>(1)</sup> Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany.—The whole question of the arrangement of days during this last great week depends upon the conclusion which we adopt with regard to the day on which our Lord was crucified. The discussion of this is reserved for a separate Note, where it may be fully dealt with. (Comp. *Excursus G: The Day of the Crucifixion of our Lord.*)

<sup>(2)</sup> There they made him a supper.—Comp. Matt. xxvi. 6 et seq., and Mark xiv. 3 et seq., which are clearly accounts of the same supper. Here the details

served : but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. <sup>(3)</sup> Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very

costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair : and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

peculiar to St. John, who was an eye-witness, will be noted. St. Matthew gives no indication of the day. St. Mark seems to place it two days before the Passover; but comp. Mark xvi. 1, 2. Both the other accounts tell us that the supper was in the house of Simon the leper. St. John does not define the place more definitely than to say that it was in Bethany ; but he alone adds the facts that Martha was still serving, and that Lazarus was present as a guest.

**And Martha served.**—The tense of this verb differs from that of the others in the verse, and implies the continued act of serving, whilst “made a feast” is the statement of the fact as a whole. (Comp. Luke x. 40.)

**Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.**—This is a natural touch answering to the impression that the fact made. It is closely connected with the statement of the preceding verse, “ Lazarus had been dead, whom He raised from the dead.” Here was one sitting at meat with them who had lain in the sepulchre four days. The meal is in his case, as afterwards in that of our Lord himself (Luke xxiv. 41—43), a physical proof of the Resurrection ; and his presence by the side of our Lord calls forth from Mary the anointing, which testifies to her gratitude and love.

**(3) Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard.**—

Here, again, St. John alone gives the name of her whom St. Matthew and St. Mark call “a woman,” and here, too, she is true to the earlier character as we have it drawn in St. Luke (x. 40, 42). From this passage also we know that it was a “pound” of ointment which she took. The other accounts tell us that it was an “alabaster box.” This pound was the Greek *litra*, the Latin “libra,” the pound of twelve ounces.

For the “ointment of spikenard,” see Mark xiv. 3, and the marginal readings there. It may perhaps mean “Nard Pistik,” or Pistik ointment, the word Pistik being a local name. The fact that this peculiar word occurs only in these two passages points to this as the probable explanation.

**And anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair.**—St. Matthew and St. Mark both state that she anointed His head. This was the usual custom (comp. Luke vii. 46, and Ps. xxiii. 5) ; but St. John remembers that the act of love went beyond that of common esteem, in the depth of its gratitude and reverence, and anointed the feet, and wiped them with her own hair.

**And the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.**—The ointment was imported from the East in sealed flasks, which were broken when it was used. The strong perfume then escaped, and spread through the house (Mark xiv. 3).

<sup>(4)</sup> Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, <sup>(5)</sup> Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor ? <sup>(6)</sup> This

a ch. 13.  
29.

he said, not that he cared for the poor ; but because he was a thief, and had the bag,<sup>a</sup> and bare what was put therein. <sup>(7)</sup> Then said Jesus, Letheralone : against the day of my burying

<sup>(4)</sup> Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot.—Comp. Notes on chap. vi. 70, 71. St. Matthew tells us that the question was asked by “the disciples ;” St. Mark, that it was asked by “certain persons ;” St. John remembers that it was Judas who spoke, and he remembers that his words were characteristic of the man (verse 6). He implies by the form in which he relates these words, that he spoke for himself, and that the others did not join in his feeling.

<sup>(5)</sup> Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence ?—Both the earlier Gospels preface this estimate by a reference to the use which was made of the ointment as actual waste. St. Matthew says only “that it might have been sold for much.” St. Mark, “that it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence,” that is, in actual value, for the yearly wage of a working man, and for the food therefore which would have maintained a poor man's household for a whole year. (Comp. Note on chap. vi. 7). St. Mark adds, “and they were angry at her.” (Comp. Note on chap. xi. 33.)

<sup>(6)</sup> This verse which follows from the reference to Judas is of course, like it, peculiar to St. John.

But because he was a thief, and had the bag.—Comp. Note

on chap. xiii. 29 and see Luke viii. 1—3). We have to think of Judas as treasurer of the common fund which supplied the wants of the little band, and from which gifts to the poor were made. The word rendered “bag” here, the only passage where it occurs in the New Testament, and “chest,” in 2 Chron. xxiv. 8—11, means literally the “key-chest,” in which musicians carried their flute-keys. Hence it was applied to a chest in the wider sense, and especially, as here, to a small and portable chest.

And bare what was put therein.—This is but to say over again, if we take the ordinary sense of the words, what is already implied in the fact that he kept the bag. The form of the word expresses continuance of the act, and may refer to the recurring opportunities of fraud as distinct from the mere fact of carrying the chest with a known sum in it. But we may certainly render the word “bare away,” for St. John himself uses it in this sense in chap. xx. 15; and this clause would then mean, “and purloined what was put therein.”

<sup>(7)</sup> Against the day of my burying hath she kept this.—The majority of the better MSS. read, “that she keep this against the day of My burying.” Comp. Matt. xxvi. 12 and Mark xiv. 8

hath she kept this. <sup>(8)</sup> For the poor always ye have with you ; but me ye have not always.

<sup>(9)</sup> Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there : and they

came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

<sup>(10)</sup> But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death ;

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The thought here differs from that in the earlier Gospels, and the common reading has therefore been adapted to harmonise with it. Taking the better text, the meaning here is, "Let her alone, that she may keep this for the day of My embalmment." She had taken a pound of ointment (verse 3) and had anointed His feet. This reminds Him of the embalmment of the dead, which had been but lately in that very place, and in the person of one sitting with them, present to their minds. Her act is significant of the future which is approaching. Let them not stay that deed of love. Before the week ends His body will be carried to the sepulchre. The preparations for the grave have already been begun.

<sup>(8)</sup> **The poor always ye have with you.**—This verse occurs word for word in both of the first two Gospels. Comp. Matt. xxvi. 11 and Mark xiv. 7; in the latter passage the words "and whosoever ye will ye may do them good" are added. There is an obvious reference to the words of the Law, "The poor shall never cease out of the land" (Deut. xv. 11); and a probable appeal which Judas himself would understand, to his special but neglected duty, as holder of the bag, to care for the poor.

**But me ye have not always.**—The thought of leaving them is present to His mind. With this assertion of physical departure, comp. the promise of spiritual presence, "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20).

<sup>(9)</sup> **Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there.**—Some of the pilgrims who had come from Jericho would have told this in Jerusalem, where those who had previously come up from the country were earnestly asking about Him (chap. xi. 55). They go forth, then, in large numbers to Bethany to see Him; and this reminds the writer that many of them went not for this purpose only, but also that they might see Lazarus.

<sup>(10)</sup> **But the chief priests consulted.**—The chief priests were for the most part Sadducees (Acts v. 17). They have been acting with the Pharisees from chap. xi. 47 onwards. Their animus is shown in that, while no charge is brought against Lazarus, his life is a witness to the divinity of Him whom they have condemned to death, and a denial of their own doctrine that there is no resurrection (Acts xxiii. 8). The words do not mean that they came to a final decision to put him to death, but that they took counsel

<sup>(11)</sup> because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

<sup>a</sup> Matt.  
21. 8.

<sup>(12)</sup> On the next day much people that were come to

the feast,<sup>a</sup> when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,<sup>(13)</sup> took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the

on the matter, and watched their opportunity.

<sup>(11)</sup> Many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.—Better, *were going away, and believing on Jesus*. The tenses mark the continuance of the secession, and the two words mark the two acts by which on the one hand they were going away from the authority of the priests and, on the other hand, were believing on Jesus. (Comp. verse 18.)

<sup>(12)</sup> In the section which follows (verses 12—19), we again meet with matter which is common to St. John and the earlier Gospels. The Entry into Jerusalem is described by each of the evangelists, and the outer incidents are told more briefly by St. John than by any one of the others. (Comp. Matt. xxi. 1—11; Mark xi. 1—11; Luke xix. 29—44.)

**On the next day.**—See Note on verse 1. St. John only gives us this definite note of time, connecting the Entry with the previous sojourn at Bethany. The Synoptic narrative is more general, describing the approach from Jericho, and naming Bethphage (Matt. and Luke) and Bethany (Mark and Luke) as stages in the journey, but not connecting the Supper at Bethany with the Entry.

**When they heard that Jesus was coming.**—They heard probably from those of the Jews (verse 9) who had gone to

Bethany. Note that these multitudes are not called Jews, though, of course, in the ordinary sense, they were so. They were not “Jews” in the sense in which St. John uses the word, and he describes them as “much people that were come to the feast.” (Comp. chap. xi. 54.)

**Took branches of palm trees.**—Better, *took branches of the palm trees*. Literally, the Greek means “the palm branches of the palm trees.” They were branches of the palms growing on the spot, or possibly such as were in general use at festivities. For the word rendered “branches,” comp. 1 Macc. xiii. 51 (“branches of palm trees”), and for that rendered “palm trees,” comp. Rev. vii. 9. Neither word occurs elsewhere in the New Testament. Again, the fuller Synoptic narrative includes but does not state this particular.

**Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.**—The better reading is, *Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, and the King of Israel*. These words of their cry are peculiar to St. John. The fullest report is St. Matthew’s (see especially xxi. 9). That all the accounts differ is natural, and they have all preserved to us some distinctive acclamation with which the crowds welcomed Him whom they received as the Messiah. The cxviii. Psalm,

King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

<sup>(14)</sup> And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,

<sup>(15)</sup> Fear not, <sup>a</sup> daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's

<sup>a</sup> Zech 9.  
9.

colt. <sup>(16)</sup> These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him. <sup>(17)</sup> The

from which these acclamations are taken (see verses 25 and 26), was currently interpreted as Messianic, and formed part of the Hallel chanted at Tabernacles and Passover. (Comp. Note on chap. vii. 37.)

It is important to observe that St. John, like St. Matthew, does not follow the Greek of the LXX. in translating the Hebrew word "Hosanna," but preserves the Hebrew sound in Greek letters. Comp. Rev. xix. 6, where the word "Alleluia" is transliterated in the same way.

<sup>(14)</sup> And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon.—St. John simply mentions this to introduce the prophecy. The others all give the incidents in detail. "Having found," does not imply that the colt was found without the search which the other Evangelists record. (Comp. the same word in chap. ix. 35.) It has been noted, as illustrating the fact that the word "found" includes the sending the disciples to look for the colt, that it is the same Greek word which Archimedes used when he found the object of his search, and cried, "Eureka! Eureka!"

<sup>(15)</sup> Fear not, daughter of Sion.—The quotation is made freely, and in an abbreviated form.

(Comp. the fuller form in Matt. xxi. 5.) It is in the two Hebrew Gospels only that the connection of the fact with the prophecy is mentioned.

**Sitting on an ass's colt.**—The Greek (LXX.) has "a young ass." St. John's translation is nearer to the Hebrew. (Comp. Introduction, p. 12.)

<sup>(16)</sup> These things understood not his disciples at the first . . . —Comp. Notes on chap. ii. 22 and xx. 9. It is a touch peculiar to St. John, and exactly in his manner. He remembers the difference between the spiritual receptivity before and after Pentecost, in the Apostolic band itself. He remembers how the Old Testament Scriptures became filled with a new life and meaning, as the Spirit brought to the memory their words, and the words of Him of whom they told.

**When Jesus was glorified.**  
Comp. Note on chap. vii. 39.

**They had done these things unto him.**—The narrative implies, these, the incidents which the others state. The phrase "these things" occurs three times, referring emphatically to the correspondence between the prophecy and the actual incidents.

<sup>(17)</sup> When he called Lazarus . . . bare record.—Several MSS.

people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. <sup>(18)</sup> For this cause the people also met him, for that they

heard that he had done this miracle. <sup>(19)</sup> The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing ? behold, the world is gone after him.

and some of the oldest versions read, "bare record that He called Lazarus out of the grave, and raised him from the dead." The difference in the texts is only that of one letter (*οὐτε* and *οὐτι*). If we take the reading which was adopted by our translators, and which is best supported, we must distinguish between the multitude mentioned in this verse, and that mentioned in verse 18. The meaning of this text is that the Jews of verses 9 and 11, and those of chap. xi. 45, with the people of Bethany, bear witness of the event, the recurrence of which they had themselves seen; and that this testimony was received by the multitude of pilgrims who went forth therefore to receive Jesus as the Messiah. (Comp. especially Luke xix. 37.) This interpretation makes the Jews of Jerusalem themselves the witnesses whose testimony leads the multitude to receive our Lord as the Christ.

If we take the alternative but less probable text, the multitude in both verses will be one and the same.

<sup>(18)</sup> For this cause the people—*i.e.* (see last verse), the multitude of verse 12.

For that they heard . . . this miracle.—The emphatic form of the sentence points out that the raising of Lazarus was

the miracle which carried the entire conviction of the multitude. They had heard of and in some cases seen the miracles, but this stood by itself, as witness which could not be gainsaid.

<sup>(19)</sup> Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing ?—The words may be also read, "Look how ye profit nothing" (imperative); or, *Ye perceive how ye profit nothing* (indicative). Upon the whole this last is to be preferred. They blame each other for the failure of all their plans (comp. chap. xi. 47), and prepare themselves to accept the counsel of Caiaphas.

**Behold, the world has gone after him.**—They use terms which express the bitterness of their despair. They who had asked in scorn, "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him ?" who called "cursed" "this people who knoweth not the law" who followed Him (chap. vii. 48, 49), have heard Jews of Jerusalem express their belief in Him; and now, see Him whom they are seeking to kill, borne as the Messiah at the head of a throng of pilgrims.

The words rendered "gone after him" imply that they had gone away from themselves, and rejected their authority; and had then gone after Him (Comp Note n verse 11.)

(<sup>20</sup>) And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast : (<sup>21</sup>) the same came

therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

(<sup>20</sup>) **And there were certain Greeks.**—Comp. Note on chap. vii. 35, where we have the same word in the original, and Acts vi. 1; ix. 29; and xi. 20. They were not *Hellenists*, i.e., Greek Jews, but *Hellenes*, i.e., Gentiles.

**Among them that came up to worship at the feast.**—The words imply that they were in the habit of going up to Jerusalem at the feasts, i.e., that though Greeks by birth, they had been admitted to the privileges of Judaism. They belonged to the class known as “Proselytes of the Gate,” and were so named from the phrase in the Law, “the stranger that is within thy gates” (Ex. xx. 10 *et al.*). (Comp. Matt. xxiii. 15 and Acts viii. 27.)

(<sup>21</sup>) **The same came therefore to Philip.**—We have no indication of the time when, or of the place where, these words were spoken. St. John alone gives us this incident, and he gives us this incident only, of all that occurred, as we know from the earlier Gospels, between the entry into Jerusalem and the Last Supper; and he relates this coming of the Greeks not for the sake of the fact itself, but for that of the discourse which followed upon it. He is careful, therefore, only to mention it, and is not concerned, for the purpose he has in view, with any of the historic details. The last words of the discourse (verse 36) do, however, intimate that they were followed by a retirement

from public teaching, and from public appearance in Jerusalem. They would, then, be among the last words spoken in the Temple before the retirement to Bethany, on the evening of what we call Wednesday. (Comp. Luke xxi. 37.) They were uttered, probably, in the Court of the Gentiles, as He passed from the Court of the Women, which, as the most public place for Jewish assemblies, was the frequent scene of His teaching. On the previous day, the Court of the Gentiles had been cleansed from the traffic and merchandise which had been customary in it, and the temple had been declared to be “a house of prayer for all nations.” The court of the Gentiles was divided from the inner square of the Temple by a stone fence, bearing upon pillars, placed at regular distances, the following words in Greek and Latin:—“No alien must pass within the fence round the Temple and the court. If any one be caught doing so, he must blame himself for the death that will follow.” This prohibition was known before, from Josephus (*Ant.* xv. 11, 5); but in our own day one of the very slabs, bearing the exact words, has been discovered by M. Ganneau during the excavations of the Palestine Exploration Fund. (Comp. Acts xxii. 28, 29, and especially Mark xi. 17.) The events and the words of these days must have brought strange thoughts to the minds of proselytes, men who were worshippers of the

(22) Philip cometh and tell-  
eth Andrew: and again  
Andrew and Philip tell  
Jesus.

(23) And Jesus answered  
them, saying, The hour is  
come, that the Son of  
man should be glorified.

one God by personal conviction, and not because of the faith of their ancestors; and with hearts filled with wonder as to what these things meant — half-grasping, it may be, the truth that this middle wall of partition should be broken down—they ask for a special interview with Jesus. (Comp. Eph. ii. 12 *et seq.*)

**Which was of Bethsaida of Galilee.**—The mention of this place again here seems to intend that it should be taken as explaining why these Greeks came to Philip. They may have themselves come from the neighbourhood of Bethsaida, or from one of the Greek cities of Decapolis.

(22) **Philip cometh and telleth Andrew.**—It is a striking coincidence, and perhaps more than this, that the Greeks thus came into connection with the only Apostles who bear Greek names; and may themselves have had some special connection by birth, or residence, or culture with Greek civilisation. The names have occurred together before (chaps. i. 44; vi. 7, 8): they were fellow-townsmen and friends. But Andrew was also brother of Simon Peter, and is one of the first group of four in the apostolic band. (Comp. Mark xiii. 3.) The Greeks then naturally come to Philip, and Philip consults his friend Andrew, who is in a position of greater intimacy with the Lord than he himself is, and they come together and tell Jesus.

(23) **And Jesus answered them, saying.**—The words are rather the utterance of the thoughts of His own mind, which this visit of the Greeks suggests, than an answer. They are spoken to the Apostles, but the narrative is too compressed for us to know whether any answer was given to the Greeks apart from this. The explanation which is most probable is that the Greeks heard this discourse, and that it is in reality an answer to the thoughts of their hearts, and to the words they wished to have spoken to Him.

**The hour is come.**—This approach of men from outside the limits of Judaism who have been admitted within its pale, and who now, when priests and rulers are seeking to kill Him, are seeking to render Him homage, brings back again the thought of the scattered sheep, for whose gathering the Shepherd's life must be laid down (chap. x. 16—19). They are the first-fruits of the great flocks of humanity, and their presence is as the first stroke of the bell which sounds the fatal but glorious hour. That hour marked out in the counsels of God, and ever present in His own thoughts, has now come.

**That the Son of man should be glorified.**—This is to be accomplished in His ascension and return to the glory of Heaven. (Comp. Notes on chap. xvii. 1, 2, 5.) But the immediate connection implies that He regards the extension of His Messianic work, and the

<sup>(24)</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but

<sup>a</sup> Matt.  
10. 39.

if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. <sup>(25)</sup> He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life

acceptance of His truth by the nations of the earth, as part of the glory of the Son of man. The connection implies also that He regards His own death as the dark path which must be trodden before the path of glory can be entered.

<sup>(24)</sup> **Verily, verily, I say unto you.**—He is passing to the deeper truth which underlies His words, and calls attention to what He is about to say by the usual and solemn “Verily, verily.” (Comp. Note on chap. i. 51.)

**Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die.**—The truth is one of those of the spirit-world, lying beyond the ordinary language of men. He prepares them for it by what we call the analogy of a physical law, but what is really an instance of the working of the great law of life, which God has given to the moral and physical worlds alike. All knew that a grain of wheat, though containing in itself the germs of life, would remain alone, and not really live unless it fell to the earth. Then the life-germs would burst forth, and the single grain, in its own death, would give life to blade, and stalk, and ear of corn. Its death then was the true life, for it released the inner life-power which the husk before held captive; and this life-power multiplying itself in successive grains would clothe the whole field with a harvest of much fruit.

This law Christ now teaches to be a law also of the moral world, and one to which His own life is

subject. Here too life issues from death. The moral power which is the life of the world finds its source in the death of the Son of man. “He is life.” “In Him is life.” “He quickens whom He will.” “Whosoever believeth in Him hath eternal life.” These truths this Gospel has told us again and again: but Christ now tells that while He is still on earth this life exists but in its germs; and that in His death it will burst forth, and grow up, and multiply itself in the great spiritual harvest of the world. Such was the prophecy. The history of all that is best, and truest, and noblest in the life of eighteen centuries comes to us as the fulfilment. Hearts hardened, sinful, dead, that have been led to think of His death, and in thoughts of it have felt germs of life springing up and bursting the husks of their former prison, and growing up into living powers which have changed their whole being; this is the individual fulfilment that has come to many and may come to all.

<sup>(25)</sup> **He that loveth his life shall lose it.**—The reading here is uncertain, and may be, perhaps with slightly more probability is, *he that loveth his life loses it*—i.e., that the loss of life is not in the future only, but that in the present, in every moment when a man loves and seeks to save his own life, he is then, and by that very seeking, actually losing it.

The words of this verse are familiar to us from the earlier Gospels.

in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. <sup>(25)</sup> If any

man serve me, let him follow me ; and where I am,

pels. They should be compared with Matt. x. 39; xvi. 25; Mark viii. 35; Luke ix. 24; xvii. 33. The disciples had heard them laid down as the law of their own life and work. They now hear the mysterious words again, and they are asserted as the law to which even His life is submitted. There is even in His human nature a physical and emotional life which would shrink from sacrifice and death (verse 27; comp. Matt. xxvi. 39), but in self-sacrifice and death is His own glory and the life of the world. There is in all human nature a principle which would seek as the highest good the life of the body and of the soul, as distinct from the higher life of the spirit, and would shrink from sacrifice and death ; but the true principle of life is of the spirit, and only in the sacrifice of the desires of the lower physical and emotional life is that spiritual life realised.

<sup>(26)</sup> If any man serve me, let him follow me.—The close connection of verses 23—25 make it certain that the spiritual law of sacrifice is there applied to the life of our Lord Himself. This verse makes it equally certain that the law is applied to those who follow Him. The point of the whole teaching is missed unless we think of the Greeks as present. They had come as volunteer disciples. Did they know what the discipleship was? Were they prepared to follow Him in self-sacrifice, that through sacrifice they may obtain eternal life? It had been the condition of earlier discipleship. It is laid down for the new disciples, but in the

presence of the older ones who in the dark days that have now come were to learn what sacrifice meant. The Greeks needed no less than the Hebrews to learn it ; the men of a wider civilisation and more philosophic thought no less than the fishermen of Galilee and the scribes of Jerusalem. All self-seeking, whether in the coarser forms of pleasure and power or in the more refined forms of emotion and thought, is self-loving ; all self-sacrifice, whether in the daily round of duty to man or in the devotion of the whole self to God, is self-saving. Self-seeking is always akin to, and oftentimes one with, hatred of others ; and hatred is death. Self-sacrifice is akin to, and one with, love to others ; and love is life.

And where I am, there shall also my servant be.—This is an anticipation of the glory of the Son of man for which the hour had already come. (Comp. Note on chap. xvii. 24.)

If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.—The condition is the same as in the first clause of the verse, the difference of that which follows upon the condition again bringing out in the fulness of its meaning the law of life through sacrifice :

<p>"If any man serve Me,"</p>	<p>"let him follow Me"</p>	<p>"he that hateth his life in this world"</p>
	<p>"him will my Father honour"</p>	<p>"shall keep it unto life eternal."</p>

The honour of the servant after his work is done, is in the same

there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour.

(27) Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say?

relation to that work as the glory of the Son of man is to His work. This honour will consist in his being where the Son of man is; and this will be the Father's gift (chap. xvii. 24).

(27) Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say?—The word rendered "soul" is the same word as that rendered "life" in verse 25. (Comp. especially Matt. xvi. 25, 26.) It is the seat of the natural feelings and emotions, and, as the fatal hour approaches, our Lord is in that region of His human life troubled. There is a real shrinking from the darkness of the death which is at hand. The conflict exists but for a moment, but in all its fearfulness is real, and then the cup of the world's woe is seized and drunk to its bitter dregs. Men have sometimes wondered that St. John passes over the agony of the garden of Gethsemane, but the agony of Gethsemane is here, and the very words of Matt. xxvi. 39 are echoed. Men have wondered, too, that in the life of the Son of man a struggle such as this could have had even a moment's place. Not a few, indeed, would at any cost read the words otherwise, but they cannot be read otherwise either on the written page or in the hearts of men. That troubled soul asked, "What shall I say?" Blessed reality! In that struggle humanity struggled, and in that victory humanity won.

Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

(28) Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice

Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.—It is uncertain whether the first words of this sentence are a prayer, or whether they should be read as a question. In the latter case the meaning would be, "What shall I say? Shall I say, Father save Me from this hour?" But no: for this cause came I unto this hour. I cannot shrink back or seek to be delivered from it." As a prayer the meaning would be—"Father, save Me from this hour; but for this cause, that I may be saved from it, came I unto this hour. The moment of agony is the moment of victory."

The real difficulty of the verse lies in the words "for this cause," for which a meaning must be sought in the context. No interpretation of them is free from objection, but that which seems to have, upon the whole, most probability, understands them as referring to the words which follow, and reads the clause, "Father, glorify Thy name" as part of this verse. The sense of the whole passage would therefore be "Father, save Me from this hour; but Thy will, not Mine, be done; for this cause came I unto this hour, that Thy name be glorified; Father, glorify Thy name." (Comp. Luke xii. 49, 50.)

(28) Father, glorify thy name.—The pronoun "Thy" is emphatic. The Son's will is one with that of the Father; the Son's glory is in the glorifying the Father's

from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. <sup>(29)</sup> The

people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said,

name. Comp. the opening clause of the Lord's Prayer (Matt. vi. 9 *et seq.*) and in this context Note on verse 23.

**Then came there a voice from heaven.**—The words mean, not that a sound came from heaven, but that there was heard an articulate voice (comp. Note on chap. iii. 8); and that St. John intended his readers to understand this cannot be questioned. He records here a fact parallel to those recorded by the other Evangelists at the Baptism (Matt. iii. 17; Mark i. 11; Luke iv. 22), and at the Transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 5; Mark ix. 7; Luke ix. 35), and parallel to that to which St. Luke and St. Paul have testified (Acts ix. 4; xxii. 9; xxvi. 14).

**I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.**—The words are without limit, extending to the whole past and to the whole future of God's revelation of Himself to man. The only limit in the context is that this revelation is thought of as in the person of Christ. His words, His works, His life revealing the mercy and love and majesty of the Father, had to many hearts glorified the Father's name. The wider future is at hand. The death and resurrection are to reveal God's character, and therefore glorify the Father's name to all the world. (Comp. Ex. xxxiii. 18, 19, xxxiv. 5—7.)

<sup>(29)</sup> The people . . . . said that it thundered.—Better, *the multitude.* Nothing could be stronger testimony to the fact that

this narrative was written by one who was present at the events of which he tells, than the way in which these thoughts of the people at the time are preserved to us. Their insertion by a later hand is all but impossible; and they are, moreover, opposed to what must be assumed as the object of a later writer. In a treatise to prove the divinity of Christ there could be no place for them. In a Gospel which assumes the truth that He is divine, and does not seek to prove it, but to bear witness to the life which carries its own proof (comp. Notes on chaps. i. 7; xx. 30, 31), they are evidence that the witness is true. The fact that St. John clearly means us to understand (verse 28) that a distinct voice spake from heaven does not forbid our understanding also that this voice was heard more or less distinctly, or was as a voice not heard at all, in proportion as the hearts of the hearers were or were not receptive of the voice of God. To some it seemed but as natural thunder, but their own Scripture had taught again and again “God thundereth marvellously with His voice: great things doeth He which we cannot comprehend,” and the religious interpretation of nature hears everywhere the voice of God. Others, and these must have been Pharisees (comp. Acts xxiii. 8, 9), recognise a voice which is more than that of nature or of man, and think that an angel hath spoken. (Comp. Note on chap. v. 4.)

An angel spake to him.  
 (30) Jesus answered and said,  
 This voice came not because  
 of me, but for your sakes.

(31) Now is the judgment of  
 this world: now shall the  
 prince of this world be cast  
 out. (32) And I, if I be lifted

(30) **This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.**—More exactly, *not for My sake did this voice come, but for your sakes.* These words are an answer to the thoughts, spoken and unspoken, of the multitude. Jesus Himself knew that the Father heareth Him always, but this answer is a sign to others. (Comp. chap. xi. 41, 42.) He calls it a *voice* in answer to those who said it thundered, or that an angel had spoken. There was that, then, which seemed to them but the thunder's sound or an angel's word, which, coming in answer to His prayer and after His teaching, should have been, to ears ready to hear and minds willing to receive, the voice of God witnessing to the mission of His Son.

(31) **Now is the judgment of this world.**—For the word “judgment” comp. Notes on chaps. iii. 17–19 and xvi. 11. There is here, following on the coming of the Greeks, which He reads as a sign, and upon the voice from heaven, which was a sign for the multitude, the thought of the Messianic kingdom, of which the first members were then present, and which was to comprehend all men. This thought includes—(1) the judgment (condemnatory) of this world; (2) the casting out of the prince of this world; (3) the establishment of His spiritual kingdom (verse 32).

**Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.**—The

title “prince of this world” was the regular Rabbinic title for Satan, whom they regarded as the ruler of the Gentiles, the Jews not being included in his kingdom. The reign of the true Messiah is over the Gentile and Jewish world alike; Gentiles as well as Jews are at this moment in the Temple listening to Him; Jews as well as Gentiles have been subjects of the prince of this world (chap. viii. 44; Rom. ii.). The world itself, as opposed to Christ, is condemned, for its unbelief crucifies Jesus Christ; but the Resurrection and Ascension are Heaven's witness that He is the Son of God. The world's condemnation is followed by the casting out of its ruler.

The whole future is present to the mind of Christ, and in the confidence of victory He uses the emphatic “now” of both the judgment of the world and the dethronement of its prince. It should be noted, however, that the tenses differ. The one is thought of as the immediate result of His death; the other is the gradual victory of truth, and is spoken of in the same future as the drawing all men of the following verse.

(32) **And I, if I be lifted up from the earth.**—The pronoun is strongly emphatic. “And I,” in opposition to the prince of this world; the conqueror in opposition to the vanquished foe. The conditional form, “If I be lifted up,” answers to the “troubled soul” of verse 27. He knows that it will be so, but He

up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. <sup>(33)</sup> This he said, signifying what death he should die.

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 110.  
4.

<sup>(34)</sup> The people answered him, we have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever :<sup>a</sup> and how sayest

leaves the future to declare its own truths. Comp. the phrases, "If it be possible," "If this may not pass away from Me" (Matt. xxvi. 39, 42), and Note on chap. xiv. 3. The words "lifted up" have occurred before in chaps. iii. 14 and viii. 28; but the context here shows that they include the thought of the ascension into heaven. It is from the heavenly throne that the Messiah will rule over His spiritual kingdom.

**Will draw all men unto me.**—Better, . . . unto Myself. The words "all men" are not to be limited by interpretations which refer them to nations, or to elect persons within nations; but are to be taken in all the fulness of their width as meaning simply what they say—"all." The drawing unto Himself is the assertion of His reign over the world, from which the prince of evil shall be cast out. He will Himself be the centre of the new kingdom, from which none shall be shut out. These Greeks who are drawn to Him now are the first-fruits of the harvest of which the whole world is the field, and of which the last day is to be the great ingathering. The word "draw" occurs once in the New Testament, besides this passage, in a moral sense (chap. vi. 44; comp. Note on it there). It is accomplished in the work of the Holy Spirit, whose mission to the Church was dependent on the ascension of our Lord (chaps. vii. 39 and xvi. 7); and the promise is

fulfilled even in the case of those who resist the Holy Spirit's influence. They are drawn by the moral power of the life and death and resurrection of Christ brought home to them by the Holy Ghost; but no moral power can compel a will which is free. (Comp. Note on chap. vi. 37.) The whole mission-work of the Church and every effort which Christianity brings to bear upon the evil of the world implies this moral drawing; and implies, too, the power of man to reject it. But we may not say this moral power is not leading men to Christ, where we can least trace it, and we may not say that there is any limit where its influence ends. (Comp. 1 Pet. iii. 19.)

**(33) By what death he should die.**—Better, *by what manner of death* . . . (Comp. chap. xviii. 32.) The words are the Apostle's interpretation of the saying of our Lord. He remembers it as he has recorded it twice before (chaps. iii. 14 and viii. 28), but he adds here words ("from the earth") which supply another thought, though the two thoughts are not inconsistent. The words bear the double sense, and looking back upon the fact of the Crucifixion, he sees in that a lifting up which was part of the great moral victory over the world, and in the very cross of shame he sees the throne of glory.

**(34) We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever.** . . . —The term "law"

thou, The Son of man must | . | be lifted up? who is this

refers to the whole of the Old Testament Scripture, as we have seen in chap. x. 34. (Comp. Note there.) They may have referred to such passages as Pss. lxxxix. 36 and cx. 4; Isa. ix. 6; Dan. vii. 13, 14. This remark is an instance of the knowledge of Rabbinic theology which interpreted such passages of a temporal Messianic reign. They had witnessed His triumphal entry into the royal city, and had joined in the acclamations which hailed Him as their King. They expected Him to free them from Roman bondage, and to rule over them in an earthly paradise to which there should be no end. The Christ they thought was to abide for ever.

**How sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up?**—His words have conveyed to them the idea of His death, and we find "lifted up" used not unfrequently in the Rabbinical writings in this sense; but they do not understand more than this. It contradicts all their visions of a Messianic reign. The Son of Man to be lifted up! What meant, then, such words as these—"And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. vii. 14)? They cannot reconcile these things, and they ask Him to explain them.

He had not at this time used the exact words they quote, if St. John has given to us the conversation in full, but they occur in chap. iii.

14, and the title "Son of Man" occurs in this context in verse 23. It was, moreover, present to their thoughts from the passage in Daniel, and must have been familiarly known as used by Christ of Himself. (Comp. Note on chap. i. 51.)

**Who is this Son of man?**—“Who is *this* Son of Man?” they would say. “We know who is the Son of Man who is to abide for ever, but this Son of Man who is to die we know not.” The words express that they are wavering in their attachment to Him. The question was asked probably on the Wednesday. It came midway between the “Hosanna” of the entry into Jerusalem and the “Crucify Him!” of the trial.

The words are remarkable as throwing light upon the sudden changes of feeling, which swayed the multitude from the pole of faith to that of rejection. They heard words from Christ or saw works done by Him which carried conviction to all minds; but then there came some technical interpretation of an Old Testament passage declaring what the Messiah was to be, and in the cooler moments, when no word was speaking to the ear and no work presented itself to the eye, this test seemed fatal to the claim, and disbelief took the place of belief, and hatred that of love. We have met this again and again in the case of the priests and Pharisees. They did not, we may well believe, during the last days, leave any means untried by which they might move the fickle minds of the masses. (Comp. Matt. xxvii. 20.)

Son of man? <sup>(35)</sup> Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for

he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. <sup>(36)</sup> While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These

<sup>(35)</sup> Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you.—It is better, as we have often seen, to read *Therefore* for “Then.” The word connects what follows closely with what has gone before. It was because of their question that Jesus said this. And yet it is not said that “He answered them,” because what He said was not a direct answer. They are asking questions in which we may trace the spirit, if not the very words, of the formal, literal objectors who had, with like technicalities, stifled the truth whenever it was springing up in their minds. Such questions cannot be really answered, because they are not really questions. And now the day has gone, and the night is at hand. The old thought comes back to Him (chaps. ix. 4; xi. 9). The last rays of light are shining. It is but a little while, and He warns them with all the solemnity of this thought.

**Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.**—The better reading is, *Walk according as ye have the light*—*i.e.*, “Walk as men who are conscious that the light is among them, use your opportunities; do not ask questions to raise objections, but ask them in order that you may know the truth.” The man who thus used the light would by no means walk in darkness, but would have the light of life (chap. viii.

12). For him that neglected to use the means and faculty he had, both would cease to exist. (Comp. Rom. i. 21.)

The word “come upon,” or “overtake,” is used of some sudden seizure. There are two parallels in Biblical Greek, “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that the day should overtake you as a thief” (1 Thess. 7. 4), and “Be sure your sin will find you out” (Num. xxxii. 23).

**He that walketh in darkness.**—Comp. Notes in chaps. viii. 12; ix. 4; xi. 9; and 1 John ii. 11.

**Knoweth not whither he goeth.**—The last word means “goeth away,” “departeth.” The frequent use of the word by St. John to express departure to the other world suggests that meaning here. He was going away. They ask, “Who is this Son of Man who is lifted up?” “. . . who goes away?” He warns them lest darkness seize them, and they go away into darkness. In the next four chapters the same word is used twelve times of Christ’s departure. (Comp., e.g., xiii. 3, 33, 36.)

**While ye have light, believe in the light.**—Better, as above, *According as ye have the light*. The words are repeated and placed in the most emphatic position in the sentence.

**That ye may be the children of light.**—Better, *that ye may become sons of light*. (Comp. for

things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

<sup>(37)</sup> But though he had done so many miracles be-

fore them, yet they believed not on him : <sup>(38)</sup> that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who

this phrase Note on chap. xvii. 12 ; and see Luke x. 6, and xvi. 8 ; also Eph. v. 8.) The thought here is the one familiar in St. John, that the believer should become like unto Him in whom he believed. Those who believed in the light should receive light, and become themselves centres whence light should radiate to others and illuminate their own paths.

**These things spake Jesus and departed.** — (Comp. Luke xxi. 37.) He retired probably to Bethany.

<sup>(37)</sup> **But though he had done so many miracles before them.** — The words “before them” mean “in their presence,” “before their eyes.” They refer to the multitude (verse 34). St. John’s narrative implies, therefore, that the “signs” of the earlier Gospels were well known. He has himself recorded but six miracles, and all these, with the exception of the feeding the five thousand, belong to the Judaean ministry. (Comp. Note on chap. ii. 11.)

**Yet they believed not on him.** — This is the writer’s comment on the general result of Christ’s work at the close of His public teaching. This too is said of the multitude, the people as a whole. There were, of course, not a few who were then walking according as they had light, but it was not so with the many. Rejection and not acceptance was the result of Christ’s personal work

on earth; yet rejection accompanied, as on this day, by signs which pointed to a world-wide acceptance. “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name” (chap. i. 11, 12).

<sup>(38)</sup> **That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled.**

— This is the first instance in this Gospel of a phrase familiar to us already from its frequent occurrence in St. Matthew. We shall find it again in chaps. xiii. 18; xv. 25; xvii. 12; xviii. 9, 32; xix. 24, 26. Its frequency is one of the characteristics of the two Gospels which are most allied to Hebrew modes of thought. St. Matthew and St. John both regard the events of our Lord’s life as fulfilling the prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures. These prophecies foretold what in the divine plan was destined to occur, and therefore the events are regarded as occurring, in order that the will of God, as expressed in the prophecy, may be fulfilled. (Comp. Matt. i. 22.)

**Lord, who hath believed our report? . . .** — The quotation is from the Greek version of Isa. liii. 1. That prophecy was by all understood of the Messiah. The prophet’s lamentation of the neglect of the prophetic message by the people is here placed by the Evangelist, in his interpretation of it, in the lips of the Messiah Himself,

hath believed our report?<sup>a</sup>  
and to whom hath the arm  
of the Lord been revealed?  
<sup>(39)</sup> Therefore they could not  
believe, because that Esaias

<sup>a</sup> Isa. 53.  
1: Rom.  
10. 16.  
<sup>b</sup> Matt.  
10. 14.

said again, <sup>(40)</sup> He hath  
blinded their eyes,<sup>b</sup> and  
hardened their heart;  
that they should not see  
with *their* eyes, nor under-

as He, in the fuller meaning, addresses the Father with the words, "Who hath believed our report?" (Comp. the words as quoted by St. Paul in Rom. x. 16.) Here the "our report" means the "truth which we have declared unto them." (So Jer. x. 22, Gal. iii. 2.)

**And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?**—Comp. Luke i. 51, and Acts xiii. 17. The phrase was used, as in Isa. li. 9, lli. 10, to express the power of the Lord, and here refers especially to the power of the Lord manifested in the whole life of Christ. The signs which were revelations of this power are, of course, prominent in the thought, and the question strongly expresses the negative of the previous verse.

<sup>(39)</sup> **Therefore they could not believe, because.**—The words refer to those which have gone before, not to those which follow, and then by an addition give the reason more fully. "It was on account of the divine will expressed in Isaiah's prophecy." "It was therefore, namely, because Isaiah said again."

The words, "they could not believe," must be taken in their plain meaning as expressing impossibility. The Apostle is looking back upon the national rejection of Christ, and seeks a reason for it. He remembers how our Lord Himself had explained His method of teaching by parables, and has based it upon this prophecy of Isaiah (Matt. xiii. 14). The

principle was that which has been repeated in His last public words (verses 35 and 36); that power used is increased, and power neglected destroys itself. Here, then, in these prophetic words was the reason they could not believe. Wilful rejection had been followed by rejection, which was no longer within the power of the will. With this statement of St. John's should be compared our Lord's words on the same subject in chaps. v. 40 and vi. 37, Notes, and St. Paul's arguments in Rom. ix.—xi.

<sup>(40)</sup> **He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart...**—These words are quoted three times in the New Testament. Our Lord, as we have seen, quotes them as explaining His own teaching (Matt. xiii. 14); St. John quotes them here to explain the rejection of that teaching; St. Paul quotes them in Acts xxviii. 26, to explain the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews at Rome. Yet we are to remember that the prophet and those who quote him are all witnesses that within Israel there were eyes which were not blinded and hearts which were not hardened. Isaiah, and John, and Paul, were all Jews; and our Lord Himself was, in His human nature, of the seed of Abraham. Isaiah's prophecy is accompanied by the promise of a holy seed (verse 13); St. John quotes these words, and adds that "even of the rulers many believed" (verse 42); St. Paul quotes them when

stand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. <sup>(41)</sup> These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

<sup>(42)</sup> Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him ; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest

"some believed the things which were spoken and some believed not" (verse 24) ; our Lord quotes them, and immediately says, "But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear." There is, indeed, a judicial blinding and a judicial hardening—let no man therefore presume ; but these come only to eyes that will not to see, and to hearts that will not to hear—let no man therefore despair. The quotation in this place does not follow exactly either the Hebrew or the Greek of the passage in Isaiah. In the Hebrew text, as in the Authorised version, the prophet is commanded to "make the heart of this people fat . . ." The Greek text says simply, "The heart of this people was hardened . . ." St. John represents the action which God commanded to be done as done by Himself, and speaks of it in the past tense.

**And I should heal them.**—The pronoun here refers to Christ. St. John in his interpretation of the prophecy has made God ("He") the author of the judicial blindness and hardness, and represents Christ as the physician. This clause is, however, not to be taken separately, but is governed by "that not" which precedes. The effect of their not turning was that Christ could not heal them.

On the whole verse comp. Matt. xiii. 14, and Acts xxviii. 26.

**(41) These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory.**—The

better text is, . . . *because he saw His glory.* (Comp. Note on the reading in verse 17). The result of seeing His glory was that he spake of Him. This is St. John's interpretation of the prophecy. Isaiah himself tells us, "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple" (chap. vi. 1). But no man hath seen God at any time. The Word is the express image of His Person. This glory was of the pre-incarnate Word, who was in the beginning with God, and was God.

**(42) Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him.**—This is strongly asserted in opposition to the spiritual blindness of the nation. There were, notwithstanding, many even in the Sanhedrin itself who believed on Him.

**But because of the Pharisees they did not confess.**—Comp. Note on chap. ix. 22. It seems from the present passage that the Pharisees were the most determined foes of Christ, and that even the rulers were kept in awe by their threat of excommunication. This submission to the Pharisees' yoke, which kept them from Christ, was itself blinding their eyes and hardening their hearts. They are at once, therefore, the exception to, and the illustration of, the principle of which St. John was speaking. They had the power to see the truth, but they had not the

they should be put out of the synagogue : <sup>(43)</sup> for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.<sup>a</sup>

a ch. 5.  
44.

<sup>(44)</sup> Jesus cried and said. He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. <sup>(45)</sup> And he that seeth me seeth him

will to face boldly the results of their own convictions, and the unused power ceased to exist. (Comp. Rom. x. 10.)

<sup>(43)</sup> For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.—For “praise” read in both instances *glory*. “The glory which comes from men more than the glory which came from God.” Comp. Note on chap. v. 44, where the truth is put in the form of a question by our Lord. Here it explains the fact that there were men who believed, and yet did not publicly confess their faith. There our Lord’s question goes deeper, and asserts that the seeking of the glory which comes from men is inconsistent with the existence of any true belief in God.

<sup>(44)</sup> The last few verses (37—43) have given us the thoughts of St. John as he looked back on the unbelief of Judaism. He had given our Lord’s closing word in verse 36, and there stated that He hid Himself from them. He now gives other words of our Lord condemning the unbelief of which he had been speaking, and of which the probable explanation is that they are a summary of words previously uttered by our Lord, but grouped together here as specially bearing upon the subject of which he is writing. For the remaining verses of this chapter, the Notes will therefore consist chiefly of reference to earlier passages where the same words have already occurred.

<sup>(44)</sup> Jesus cried and said.—Comp. Notes on chap. vii. 28, 37. This forbids our understanding these words of any private discourse addressed to the disciples. The phrase implies public teaching addressed to the multitude, and it may be inferred that there was some such teaching after verse 36.

**He that believeth on me, believeth not on me.**—These words do not occur literally in any discourse of our Lord which we now have, but the thought has met us again and again. (Comp. chaps. v. 36; vii. 16 and 29; viii. 19; x. 38.) We are not to weaken the words “not on Me but,” into “not (only) on Me but,” as is often done. Jesus came not in His own name (chap. v. 43), but in that of the Father. The Son claimed no position independent of the Father. He was the representative of the Father, and those who believed in Him believed not in the representative as apart from, but in that He represented, the Sender. The same thought occurs in St. Mark ix. 37.

<sup>(45)</sup> **And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.**—The word means to see, in the sense of “behold, contemplate, gaze upon.” Better, therefore, *And he that beholdeth Me beholdet Him that sent Me*. The form of the expression is different from that of the previous verse, passing from the negative to the positive in accord with the difference of thought. *He that beholdeth Christ doth behold Him,*

that sent me. <sup>(46)</sup> I am come a light into the world,<sup>a</sup> that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. <sup>(47)</sup> And if any man hear my words,<sup>b</sup> and believe not, I judge him not : for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. <sup>(48)</sup> He

<sup>a</sup> ch. 3.  
19.  
<sup>c</sup> Mark  
16. 16.

<sup>b</sup> ch. 3. 17.

that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him : the word that I have spoken,<sup>c</sup> the same shall judge him in the last day. <sup>(49)</sup> For I have not spoken of myself ; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should

and in Him beholds the impression of the substance of God. The same thought has occurred in the words of the Evangelist in chap. i. 14, and occurs in the words of our Lord in chap. xiv. 9.

<sup>(46)</sup> I am come a light into the world . . . — Comp. Note on verse 35 and chaps. iii. 19 ; viii. 12 ; ix. 5, 39 ; xii. 35, 36.

**Should not abide in darkness.**—But should by walking according as they had the light become sons of light (verse 36).

<sup>(47)</sup> **And if any man hear my words, and believe not.**—The better reading is, . . . and keep them not. (Comp. for the words "hear" and "keep," Luke xi. 28 and xviii. 21.) For the thought of the verse comp., in this Gospel, Notes on chaps. iii. 17 *et seq.* ; v. 24, 45 *et seq.* ; viii. 15 *et seq.* ; and the apparently opposite assertion in chap. ix. 39.

<sup>(48)</sup> **He that rejecteth me . . .**—The word rendered "rejecteth" (more exactly *nullifieth*) occurs only here in St. John. (Comp. Luke vii. 30, "the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves"; and x. 16, "He that despiseth you despiseth Me.")

**Hath one that judgeth Him.**—Comp. chaps. iii. 18 and

v. 45 *et seq.* ; viii. 50 ; and also Heb. iv. 12.

**The word that I have spoken.**—The very fact that He was so rejected was itself the judgment of those who rejected it.

<sup>(49)</sup> **For I have not spoken of myself.**—Comp. chaps. v. 30, vii. 16, 17, 28, 29 ; viii. 26, 28, 38. The word "for" connects this by way of reason with the condemnatory power of His word.

**The Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment.**—Comp. Note on chap. x. 18. The reference is to the commission of His Messianic life.

**What I should say, and what I should speak.**—It is clear that our Lord intends a distinction here between "saying" and "speaking." We have had the same distinction in chap. viii 43. That which He should say was the matter of the revelation which He made ; that which He should speak was rather the method in which He made it. He claims for all the authority and commission of the Father. Every truth uttered by Him, and every work and word by which it was uttered, was ordained by the Father's will. He was Himself the Word of God.

say, and what I should speak. <sup>(50)</sup> And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father saith unto me, so I speak.

A.D. 33.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 26. 2.

Every tone and accent in which that Word spoke was divine.

<sup>(50)</sup> And I know that his commandment is life everlasting.—*i.e.*, the commission of the Messianic work. It is better to read here, as before, *eternal life*. (Comp. chap. iii. 15, *et al.*) The Son speaks not of Himself, but He speaks as executing this commission, which brings spiritual and eternal life to the world. It could not be otherwise. This commandment being eternal life, the whole teaching of the Messiah must simply be an utterance of it.

**As the Father said unto me, so I speak.**—This clause answers to “what I should say and what I should speak” in the last verse. The external revelation is regarded as the work of the Son. That which the Father says is the truth revealed, and the matter and form are here identified.

### XIII.

#### [4. The fuller Revelation, and Growth of Faith among the Disciples (chaps. xiii. 1—xvii. 26).]

##### (1) LOVE MANIFESTED IN HUMILIATION (chap. xiii. 1—30).

(a) *The washing of the disciples' feet* (verses 1—11);

(b) *The spiritual interpretation of this act* (verses 12—28);

### CHAPTER XIII.—

<sup>(1)</sup> Now before the feast of the passover,<sup>a</sup> when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his

(c) *The Betrayal. Hatred passes from the presence of love* (verses 21—30).]

<sup>(1)</sup> Now before the feast of the passover.—Comp. chaps. xii. 1, 12, 36, and *Excursus G: The Day of the Crucifixion of our Lord.*

When Jesus knew that his hour was come . . . —He knew during the course of His earthly work that His hour was not yet come, and again and again declared this. (Comp. Notes on chaps. ii. 4; vii. 6; xi. 9.) Now He knows with equal certainty that the hour is at hand that He should depart unto the Father.

Having loved his own which were in the world . . . —By “His own” are here meant those who by believing on Him had received power to become the sons of God; those who by walking according as they had light were becoming sons of light. They are the true members of the family of God. (Comp. Note on chap. i. 11, 12.) The words as here used refer specially to those who had been called by Him, and had left all and followed Him. He is the Head of this family, and He knows that these His “little children” (verse 33) will be left as orphans (chap. xiv. 18). He would depart “out of the world”; they would be left “in the world,” as sheep among

own which were in the world, he loved them unto

the end. (2) And supper being ended, the devil

wolves, and as sheep without their shepherd. St. John places these facts in touching contrast. His thoughts are for them and not for Himself. For Him there would be the return to the glory of His Father's throne; but His mind dwells on the bereavement and sorrow of those He leaves behind, and this moves Him to a special manifestation of His love.

**He loved them unto the end.**—It has been usual to explain these words of the continuance of our Lord's love—"Having loved His own, He continued to love them until the last moment." This is, of course, true, but it is a truth so certain and necessary from every conception of our Lord's character as St. John has portrayed it, that we may doubt whether he would in this formal way state it. And though the phrase rendered "unto the end" sometimes means "finally"—as, e.g., in the New Testament, Luke xviii. 5, and 1 Thess. ii. 16—the sense, "unto the end" is very rare, and the general meaning is, "in the fullest degree," "up to the limit." It thus answers exactly to our "extremely."

What seems not to have been noted is that the whole sentence may be a common Hebrew idiom in Greek dress. It belongs to the simple syntax of a primitive people to express intensity by repetition. The Vale of Sodom was "pits, pits of bitumen" (Gen. xiv. 10). Esau asked Jacob to feed him with "that red, red thing" (Gen. xxv. 30). The intensity of the verbal idea was expressed in like manner by a

simple form of the verb which brought the thought before the mind, and then by the special form which denoted the action. This is sometimes preserved in the English, as, e.g., in Gen. xx. 17—"That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed" (I will bless thee abundantly, and will multiply thy seed exceedingly). Sometimes it is not. We have, e.g., in Amos ix. 8, "I will not *utterly* destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord," where the Hebrew is literally, "Destroying I will not destroy . . ." (Vulgate, *conterens non conteram*.) In these passages the English exactly follows the Greek—i.e., the Greek in the passage of Genesis repeats the words as the Hebrew does, and in that of Amos, expresses the intensity by an adverbial phrase (*εἰς τέλος*) Now that phrase is exactly the same as the one used by St. John here, and which is rendered "unto the end." St. John was a Jew writing in Greek. May we not naturally expect a Hebrew thought in Greek form? He thinks of the intensity of our Lord's love, and speaks of it in the simple expressiveness of the old Hebrew phrase, "Loving, he loved them with fulness of love." (Comp. chap. xii. 13.) This is not given as an amended rendering, because authority has been sought for it without success; but it is offered, as an explanation, to the reader's judgment. The student will find in Schleusner's *Lexicon Veteris Testamenti* other instances which support this view.

(2) **And supper being ended.**—The reading here is uncertain,

having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; <sup>(3)</sup> Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things

into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; <sup>(4)</sup> he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a

but neither reading justifies our translation. It should probably be, "And it now becoming supper time." As a matter of fact, the supper was not ended (verses 12 and 26); but they had already reclined, and were, as we say, ready for supper.

The devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot.—The better reading is, *The devil having now put it into the heart, that Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, should betray Him.* But the sense must be that of our version, "The heart of Judas" (the devil having suggested). The alternative interpretation, "the heart of the devil" (the devil having conceived) is opposed to all scriptural analogy. For the fact, comp. Matt. xxvi. 14, and Luke xxii. 3.

For "Judas Iscariot," comp. Matt. x. 4 and xxvi. 14; and in this Gospel the Note on chap. vi. 71. The name is given here in the sad fulness of this mournful record. The fact is recorded here to explain the references to Judas which follow in our Lord's words (verses 10, 18, 21, 26, 27, 30).

<sup>(3)</sup> Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands . . .—This explains the act of humility which follows. With the full consciousness of His supreme power and divine origin, and of the divine glory to which He was about to return; yes, because He was conscious of all this, He left the disciples an

example of the self-denial which is the necessary outcome of love. "Subsisting in the form of God, He thought it not a thing to be grasped at to be equal with God, but emptied Himself by taking upon Him the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of men" (Phil. ii. 6). (Comp. for the thought of the gift of all things, 1 Cor. xv. 25; Eph. ii. 22.)

<sup>(4)</sup> He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments.—Comp. Luke xxii. *et seq.* We there read of "a strife among them which of them should be accounted the greatest." It is placed by St. Luke after the Supper; but our Lord's words, "I am among you as he that serveth," point almost certainly to a connection with this parabolic act. There had been, we may well think, some self-assertion in acts or omissions, which He by His act rebukes. They may have claimed, each above his brother, the place of honour at the table; or it may be that no one had offered the customary refreshment of water for the feet, before sitting down to meat (Luke vii. 44). We cannot say what was the immediate cause which suggested His act, but if we attempt to realise the whole scene, we must believe that there was in the disciples themselves some such cause. The garment laid aside would be the outer garment, which would impede His action, leaving the tunic, which was the ordinary dress of a servant.

towel, and girded himself.  
<sup>(5)</sup> After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was

girded. <sup>(6)</sup> Then cometh he to Simon Peter : and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet ?  
<sup>(7)</sup> Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou

**And took a towel, and girded himself.**—This was itself a mark of the servant's position, and was meant to signify His assumption of the servant's work. The successive minute details of this picture carry with them their own authenticity.

<sup>(5)</sup> **After that he poureth water into a basin.**—Better, . . . *into the basin*. It was the basin in the room, commonly used, and now ready, for such purposes. The water was at hand. All suggested, then, that one of the disciples might have performed this act which the Lord now performs. That it was commonly regarded as an act of reverence from an inferior to a superior is made clear by the Rabbinical passages quoted here by Schöttgen and Lightfoot. (Comp. Luke vii. 44.)

**And began to wash the disciples' feet.**—The exactness of the narrative notes that the act was only begun, and was interrupted by the objection of Peter. This word "began" is frequent in the earlier Gospels, but it is only in this touch of accuracy that St. John uses it.

<sup>(6)</sup> **Then cometh he to Simon Peter.**—Men who have come to these words with minds full of opinions with regard to the position of St. Peter have, of course, understood them to express that he had precedence of the other Apostles ;

while others have formed the opinion that Judas Iscariot was first. It is a point of no importance, and cannot be determined. The natural impression from this verse, however, is that St. Peter's turn came after that of at least one other, and the impression from verses 24 and 25 is that St. John himself, being nearest to his Master, was that other.

**Lord, dost thou wash my feet ?**—For the title, comp. Matt. xvi. 22. The word "Thou" is to be strongly emphasised, but the common error of reading "my" as an emphatic word is to be avoided. The act is in itself natural ; perhaps is even one that he had expected from some of the less prominent in the apostolic band. What he cannot understand is that his Master should do it. "Lord, dost *Thou* wash my feet ?" Comp. with this feeling of the Apostle at the close of our Lord's life, that of John the Baptist at its commencement (Matt. iii. 14, 15).

<sup>(7)</sup> **What I do thou knowest not now.**—Here both pronouns are emphatic, and convey a rebuke to Peter. His words had almost implied that the Lord's act was wholly out of place, as of one who knew not what he was doing. The opposite was really the case. "What *I* do *thou* knowest not now."

**But thou shalt know here-**

knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.  
<sup>(8)</sup> Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my

feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.  
<sup>(9)</sup> Simon Peter saith unto

after—*i.e.*, in the teaching which is to follow (verses 13—17). The word rendered “hereafter” is different from that rendered “afterwards” in verse 36. The precise meaning is “after these things.” The sense, then, is “What *I* do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt come to know presently.” (Comp. verse 17.)

<sup>(8)</sup> **Thou shalt never wash my feet.**—For the word “never,” comp. Note on chap. viii. 51. The incidental touches of character where individual Apostles are named in this Gospel are in striking agreement with the more fully-drawn character of the other evangelists, and the value of their evidence for the authorship cannot be over-estimated. They are perfectly artless, but are beyond the most consummate art. We feel that it is the loving, impulsive, but self-confident Peter of the earlier Gospels who is speaking here. He does not wait for that after-knowledge which our Lord promises him. He sees no ground on which our Lord’s act can possibly be one which he can permit. Note that the emphasis is on the negative. The pronoun “my” is again not to be emphasised, nor is “Thou” in this passage. “Thou shalt never wash my feet.”

**If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.**—Our Lord has already intimated (verse 7) that His deed was symbolic, and He now refers to the truth underlying the outer act. The key to His

meaning is to be found in His own words in verses 13—17. By the act of washing their feet, He, their Lord, taught the spirit of self-sacrifice and love, in opposition to the spirit of self-seeking and pride which ruled even in the Apostles’ hearts. That lesson every servant and apostle of Jesus Christ must learn, for the servant is not greater than the Lord, nor the Apostle than the Sender. That lesson Peter was refusing to learn in the pride of his own impulsive will, which seemed to be humility. But unless he learns to accept the love of Christ’s humiliation, and is so cleansed by its power that he yields his human will wholly to the divine; and learns in self-sacrifice what the spirit of Christ really is, he can have no part in Him. The lesson is a hard one, but it is necessary; the sacrifice of will may be harder than that of life; but the strong man must become as the little child before he can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

For the phrase, “Thou hast no part with me,” which is again a Hebrew thought in Greek dress, comp. Matt. xxiv. 51, and Luke xii. 46. It is frequent in the Old Testament. See, e.g., Deut. xii. 12, “He hath no part nor inheritance with you.”

<sup>(9)</sup> **Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.**—Peter still misunderstands the meaning; but he is true to his loving impulsive character. No part with his Master! He will

him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head. <sup>(10)</sup> Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

<sup>(11)</sup> For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

<sup>(12)</sup> So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I

give up anything, everything. He knows not what this washing means, and cannot conceive that it is fitting for Christ to wash his feet; but if it in any sense can mean having a part with Christ, then not the feet only, but the whole man.

<sup>(10)</sup> **H**e that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet.—Better, *He who has bathed* . . . St. Peter's words have implied that he was wholly unclean, and needed for feet, and head, and hands, for the whole man, a moral cleansing. Christ answers that this was not so. The man who has been bathed is clean, but his feet coming in contact with the dust of the road need to be washed. It was so morally. They had been cleansed; their whole moral life had been changed, but they were liable to the corruption of every-day life through which they walked, and needed to be cleansed from the pollution of it. That day had furnished an example; their pride and self-seeking was of the spirit of the world, and not of the spirit of Christ; His act was a cleansing from that, but it did not imply that they were not clean. The lesson is that all, from Apostles downwards, need the daily renewing of the grace of God; and that none should find in failure, or even in the evil which clings to his daily

path, reason for questioning the reality of the moral change which has made him the child of God.

**A**nd ye are clean, but not all.—This is the moral application, accompanied by the mournful thought that it was not true of all. One there was among those who had been bathed who had allowed evil to enter into his heart and pollute it. For him cleansing had been neglected, and the daily corruption of the world had remained; evil thoughts had been harboured, until at length they had made corrupt the whole man. (Comp. Note on chap. xv. 4.)

<sup>(11)</sup> **F**or he knew who should betray him.—Comp. chap. xviii. 2, and Matt. xxvi. 48. This is the first reference to the betrayal during the feast. The words are words of warning, spoken in the love which even then might have redeemed and cleansed the heart, if it had been open to receive it. The feet of Judas were washed by his Master. Had he learnt the lesson of humility and love, he might have conquered the foul spirit of ambition and covetousness which was carrying him to destruction.

<sup>(12)</sup> **A**nd was set down again.—This means in the reclining position customary at meals. Comp. Luke xi. 37; xxii. 14; and in this Gospel chaps. vi. 10 and xxi. 20.

have done to you? <sup>(13)</sup> Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. <sup>(14)</sup> If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. <sup>(15)</sup> For I have given you an example, that ye

<sup>a</sup> Matt.  
10. 24;  
ch. 15.  
20.

should do as I have done to you. <sup>(16)</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you,<sup>a</sup> The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. <sup>(17)</sup> If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Here it implies that the washing the feet preceded the supper (verse 1).

**Know ye what I have done to you?**—This question is asked, not to be answered, but to direct their attention to what He had done, and to the interpretation which follows—“Do ye perceive what I have done? This is the meaning of it.”

<sup>(13)</sup> **Ye call me Master and Lord**—*i.e.*, Master in the sense of Teacher. The word in the original is not “Rabbi.” (Comp. Note on chap. xi. 28.) The Jewish pupils called their teachers “Rabbi” and “Mar” (Teacher), and it was not permitted to any pupil to call his teacher by his proper name (*Sanhedr.*, fol. 100, § 1). The word “Master” here refers to His position as their Teacher; the word Lord to the reverence which they paid to Him. These were the common titles of every-day life which He here asserts for Himself.

<sup>(14)</sup> **Ye ought also to wash one another's feet.**—The argument is *à fortiori*. If He had so humbled Himself as to do the work of a servant for them, much more ought they to humble themselves for each other. To make his words as striking as possible, they are prefaced by the emphatic *I*; and

“Master and Lord” is repeated from the previous verse, but in the inverse order, to give special prominence to the word of greater dignity.

<sup>(15)</sup> **That ye should do as I have done to you.**—The example is in the principle, not in the specific act; it is not “that which I have done to you,” but “according as I have done to you.” The imitation is to be worked out in applying the same principle of love and self-sacrifice in all the varying circumstances of life in which we are placed.

<sup>(16)</sup> **The servant is not greater than his lord.**—These words have already occurred in the earlier Gospels in another connection. (Comp. Matt. x. 24, and Luke vi. 40). They occur again in this Gospel in chap. xv. 20.

<sup>(17)</sup> **If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.**—The first clause of this verse assumes their knowledge of the things which He had been teaching them (verses 13–17). They were, indeed, old lessons taught before in word, and now taught in act and word.

The second clause makes their blessedness depend upon their combining action with knowledge. They had known the truth before, but their knowledge had not profited

<sup>(18)</sup> I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He

a Ps. 41.  
9.  
<sup>1</sup> Or,  
From  
hence-  
forth.

that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.<sup>a</sup> <sup>(19)</sup> Now<sup>1</sup> I tell you before it come,

them, and they needed on this very day to be taught it again.

**I speak not of you all.**—The thought of their blessedness brings back again the dark thought that there is one present who will not do these things, and who cannot therefore be blessed.

**I know whom I have chosen.**—Comp. Note on chap. vi. 70. The pronoun is strongly emphatic. “I (for My part) know whom I have chosen.” (See next verse.)

**But that the scripture may be fulfilled.**—Comp. Note on chap. xii. 38. There is an ellipsis after “but,” which is most simply filled up by some such phrase as “all this was done;” “but all this was done that the Scripture . . .” (Comp. chap. xix. 36 and Matt. xvi. 36.) Others would make the connection to be, “But I have chosen them that the Scripture . . .”

**He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.**—Comp. especially Note on the quotation in chap. ii. 18, from Ps. lxi. The present words are a free rendering of the Greek (LXX.) of Ps. xli. 9; but the LXX. follow the Hebrew more literally, and read, “hath made great his heel.” This is here interpreted to mean, “lifted up his heel,” which the Bible version of the Psalm gives, with the literal rendering *magnified* in the margin. The Prayer Book version follows the Vulgate in reading “hath laid great wait for Me.”

Our Lord’s quotation omits the

earlier part of the verse, “Mine own familiar friend whom I trusted.” He knew whom He had chosen. “He knew what was in man, and did not trust Himself to them” (chap. ii. 24, 25).

It is by no means certain that we are justified in following the title of the Psalm, and ascribing it to David. It is not improbable that here, as in Ps. lxix., we have the words of Jeremiah, and the special reference to the friend is unknown. If the Psalm was by David, then, as the king was the type of Christ, Ahithophel is doubtless the type of Judas. In any case the baseness of the treachery lay in the fact that the betrayer was one who did eat bread with the psalmist. He was, as our word expresses it, ■ “companion” (one who breaks bread with), but to this the Orientals attached a sacredness which even the Bedouin of the desert would honour. But there was one then professing to be His Apostle, eating bread with Him, and yet planning to betray Him.

**Now I tell you before it come.**—The marginal rendering is to be preferred. (Comp. chaps. i. 52; xiv. 7).

**Ye may believe that I am he.**—Comp. Note on chaps. viii. 24 and xiv. 29. The result of His henceforth declaring these things unto them before the events, will be that they will find confirmation of their faith in Him as the Messiah. Had He not then declared His knowledge of all, and traced even His choice of Judas to the will of

that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am *he*. <sup>(20)</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; <sup>a</sup> and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

<sup>a</sup> Matt.  
10. 40.  
<sup>b</sup> Matt.  
26. 21.

<sup>(21)</sup> When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. <sup>b</sup> <sup>(22)</sup> Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom

God, there would have been room for doubt whether that choice was consistent with His being the Messiah.

<sup>(20)</sup> **H**e that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me.—The thoughts presented to their minds in the preceding verses are—(1) their mission as His servants; (2) the betrayal by one of their own number; (3) the announcement of this beforehand, that in the event it may be a confirmation of their faith. They are to go forth, then, and to be content if their path is as that which their Master has trodden. They are not to be disheartened by treachery even in their midst, for this He had foreseen. The words spoken when they were called to be Apostles still hold true. Their honour and encouragement is in the fact that they are Apostles from Him, as He is an Apostle from the Father. This truth is one of those solemn utterances on which He would have them dwell, and is therefore introduced by “Verily, verily.” (Comp. Note on chap. i. 51.) For the words, which are exactly the same as those of the first commission, comp. Matt. x. 40.

<sup>(21)</sup> **H**e was troubled in spirit.—Comp. Note on chap. xi. 23. He has spoken of the future

of those who are true to their commission as Apostles. He now turns in deep emotion to him of whom those words cannot be spoken. The “Verily, verily,” and the three verbs, “was troubled,” “bare witness,” “spake,” perhaps imply that there was a pause in which His feeling checked His words, but that the witness to the truth demanded that they should be spoken, painful as they were. For the words themselves, comp. Matt. xxvi. 21.

<sup>(22)</sup> **T**hen the disciples looked one on another.—Comp. Matt. xxvi. 22 *et seq.*, and the parallel in Mark xiv. 19 and Luke xxii. 23. St. Matthew and St. Mark both state that they expressed their doubt in words, and St. Luke’s narrative implies this questioning, but as addressed to one another, not to our Lord (“And they began to inquire among themselves”). St. John remembers the look of astonishment, and the way in which each tried to read the countenance of his brother as they all heard the words, which asserted that there was a traitor in their midst. He was nearest to our Lord, and knew what others may not have known, how Peter beckoned to him, and how he put the question to our Lord. This is the moment which has been caught

he spake. <sup>(23)</sup> Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. <sup>(24)</sup> Simon

Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. <sup>(25)</sup> He

in Leonardo da Vinci's famous masterpiece in the refectory of the Dominican Fathers at Milan. The painting itself has almost passed away, but perhaps no work of art is so widely known. The three Apostles mentioned in the text are all on the right of our Lord. John is nearest to Him, and leaning towards Peter, who stretches behind Judas to speak to "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Judas, clutching the bag and upsetting the salt, declaring in every feature of that wondrous face, which cost Da Vinci a whole year's study in the lowest quarter of the city, that he is the traitor, is on the right hand of John, and between him and Peter. This verse can have no better comment than a study of this great picture, accompanied by the chapter in Lanzi's *Storia Pittorica* or Mrs. Jameson's *Sacred and Legendary Art*, would provide, and Englishmen have a noble copy of it in their own National Gallery. (See the *Sacred and Legendary Art*, Ed. 3, 1857, vol. i. p. 209.)

<sup>(23)</sup> Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom.—Leonardo's picture is in one respect misleading, and, like most paintings of the Lord's supper, has not represented the method in which the guests reclined rather than sat at table. Each leaned on his left arm, leaving the right arm free. The feet were stretched out behind the guest on his right hand, and the back of the head reached near to the bosom of the guest on the left. (Comp. Note

on verse 25.) The Jews followed this Persian method of reclining on couches at meals from the time of the Captivity, and this method of eating the Passover had the special significance of security and possession of the Promised Land, as opposed to the attitude of one undertaking a journey, which was part of the original institution (Ex. xii. 11).

**One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved**—i.e., John himself. (Comp. chap. xxi. 2, 7, 20—23, and *Introduction*, p. 15.) The same designation occurs also in chap. xix. 26.

<sup>(24)</sup> **Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him.**—The tense in the original is present. "Simon Peter therefore beckons," or, *makes a sign*. We have to remember that these Apostles were both members of the first group, who are from some special characteristics nearer to our Lord than the others. They had both been disciples of the Baptist (chap. i. 40, 41), and we may think of them in the earlier as in the later work as in a special sense companions and friends. (Comp. chap. xx. 2; Acts iii. 1; iv. 13.)

**That he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.**—The better reading is, *and saith unto him, Say who it is of whom He speaketh*. St. Peter supposes that the disciple whom Jesus loved is more than any other in the confidence of his Master, and that he knew who was here referred to, and makes a sign to him to tell what he knew.

<sup>(25)</sup> **He then lying on Jesus'**

then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? <sup>(26)</sup> Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop,<sup>1</sup> when I have

<sup>1</sup> Or,  
morsel.

dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, *the son of Simon*. <sup>(27)</sup> And after the sop Satan entered into

**breast.**—Several good authorities, including the Vatican and the Cambridge MSS., insert the word “thus.” “He then leaning thus . . .,” describes the action just as it took place (comp. Note on chap. iv. 6); but the balance of authority is against the insertion. The action is, however, exactly described in the original, for the words “lying” and “breast” are both different from those in verse 23. The English preserves this difference, but hardly conveys the full meaning. There the beloved disciple is described as reclining towards his Master’s bosom. Here he leans upon (or leans back upon, as many good authorities read), the Master’s breast, and asks Him the question, “Who is it?”

**(26) He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.**—The better reading is probably, *He it is for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him*; but the change does not affect the sense. The pronouns are emphatic. “*He it is for whom I . . .*” The word “morsel” or “sop” occurs in the New Testament only in this context. The meaning is illustrated by the use in the LXX. in Ruth ii. 14 (“Come thou hither, and thou shalt eat of the bread and dip thy morsel in the vinegar”); and Job xxxi. 17 (“And if I ate my morsel alone, and did not impart it to the orphan”). The cognate verb occurs twice in the New Testament—Rom. xiii. 20 and 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

(See context at these places.) The original root of the word means “to rub.” Hence it is “anything rubbed or broken off.” It was often used for a mouthful just like “morsel,” which means literally, *a little bite*. As used here, the word means any portion of food. The general explanation that the morsel was dipped in the *Charosheth*, or sauce in which the herbs, bread, and meat were dipped at Passover (comp. Matt. xxvi. 23), implies that this supper was the Paschal Supper. (See *Excursus G: The Day of the Crucifixion of our Lord*.)

Our Lord would preside at the meal, and distribute to each guest his portion. When John asked the question, He was about to give the morsel to Judas. He avoids the name, and makes the act which He is about to perform convey the answer to the question. That act is the token of friendship and love which even now would redeem the heart full of treachery, if that heart would but receive it. (Comp. verse 18.)

**He gave it to Judas Iscariot.**—Better, *He takes and gives . . .*, with the majority of good MSS. Note the solemn and sad fulness with which the name of Judas is again given by the Evangelist. (Comp. verse 2.)

**(27) And after the sop Satan entered into him.**—The Greek expresses more vividly the very moment when the mind finally cast out love, and left itself as a

him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. <sup>(28)</sup> Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. <sup>(29)</sup> For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said

unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. <sup>(30)</sup> He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

possession for Satan. "And after the sop, then Satan entered into Him." It was at that moment, when the last effort had been tried, and tried in vain, when the heart hardened itself to receive from Jesus the sacred pledge of love, while it was plotting in black hatred how to betray him; it was then that hope took her flight from a realm of gloom where she could no longer dwell, and light ceased to shine in a darkness that would not comprehend it.

**Then said Jesus unto him.** —Better, *Jesus therefore said unto him.* It was because he read the secrets of the heart, and saw that it was wholly given up to evil that He said it.

**That thou doest, do quickly.** —The Greek is exactly, *more quickly.* "Carry out your plans even more quickly than you have proposed. Do the fatal deed at once. It is resolved, and every effort to win thee has failed. A fixed resolve is nothing less than the deed itself."

**(28) Now no man at the table knew.**—This is a comment of the Apostle's, as he writes in remembrance of the impression made at the time upon all who were present. They heard our Lord say to Judas, "What thou doest, do quickly;" but none of them knew until afterwards that

these words referred to the betrayal.

**(29) Because Judas had the bag.**—Comp. Notes on chap. xii. 6.

**Buy those things that we have need of against the feast.**—Here, again, it will be better to postpone the consideration of details in the order of the events of this week, and to deal with the question as a whole. (Comp. *Excursus G: The Day of the Crucifixion of our Lord.*)

**That he should give something to the poor.**—Such gifts seem to have been made at all festivals. Their thought was probably of gifts to enable the poor to obtain the lamb and other requisites for keeping the Passover.

**(30) He then having received the sop.**—Comp. Note on verse 27. The narrative is resumed from that point, verses 28 and 29 being an explanatory note added by the writer. Returning to the record of what took place, he dwells again on the moment of receiving the sop, as that in which the betrayer took the fatal step which could not be retraced.

**And it was night.**—These words doubtless state the physical fact, that at the time when Judas left the room the darkness of night had already come on. He went out, and went out into the darkness

(31) Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man

glorified, and God is glorified in him. (32) If God be glorified in him, God shall

of night. We cannot say that the writer meant them to express more than this, and yet we feel that there is in them a fulness of meaning that cannot have been unintentional. It was night; and he stepped forth from light into darkness; from the presence and guidance of the Light of the World, to be possessed by and guided by the prince of darkness. It was night; and St. John could hardly have written these words without remembering those he had written but a short time before: "If a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him." (See Note on chap. xi. 10.) Comp., for the way in which St. John gives emphasis to a tragic fulness of meaning, by expressing it in a short detached sentence, chaps. xi. 35 and xviii. 40.

[2] THE LAST WORDS OF DEEPEST MEANING TO THE FAITHFUL FEW (chaps. xiii. 31—xvi. 33).

(a) *His glory is at hand, because He is going to the Father; they are therefore to love one another* (verses 31—38);

(b) *In the Father's house He will receive them to Himself. He is the Way, the Truth, the Life* (chap. xiv. 1—10);

(c) *Being in the Father, He will be present in the disciples* (verses 11—24):

(a) By answering their prayers (verses 12—14);

(b) By sending to them the

Paraclete (verses 15—17);

(γ) By abiding in them (verses 18—24).

(d) *His legacy of peace to them* (verses 25—31).]

(31) **Now is the Son of man glorified.**—Comp. Notes on chaps. xi. 4; xii. 28. The going out of Judas is the sign that the betrayal and death of the Son of Man was at hand. In that was the glory of His accomplished work, and He speaks of this glory as present. It lies so immediately before Him that it is at once realised; and the brightness of the vision overpowers all thought of the darkness of the path which leads to it.

**God is glorified in him.**—This is a re-statement of the thought which has met us whenever the work of the Son has been dwelt upon. It was the Father's work too. The glory of the Son of Man in the redemption of the world was the glory of God, who gave his only-begotten Son, that by Him the world might be saved. There is a contrast drawn here between the humanity and the divinity united in the person of our Lord. In Him, i.e., in His person, in the person of the Son of Man suffering and crucified, there were manifested the attributes of the majesty and glory of God. It was an utterance to the world, in a fulness never heard before, of the Justice, Holiness, and Love, which are the nature of God.

(32) **If God be glorified in**

also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. <sup>(33)</sup> Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said

<sup>a</sup> ch. 7.  
34.  
<sup>b</sup> Lev.  
19. 18.;  
chap.  
15. 17.  
1 John  
4 21.

unto the Jews,<sup>a</sup> Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. <sup>(34)</sup> A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another;<sup>b</sup> as I have loved

him.—These words are omitted by a majority of the best MSS.

**God shall also glorify him in himself.**—The tense now changes to the future, and the glory thought of is that of the Father's throne. The words "in Himself," refer to "God," not to "the Son of Man." The thought is that the humiliation by which God is manifested to the world is the glory of God in the person of the Son of Man, and that this shall be followed by the glory of the Son of Man in the person of God, not simply and generally by His return to the glory of the pre-incarnate state, but by His return to it as the Son of Man. (Comp. Notes on chap. xvii. 4, 5.)

**And shall straightway glorify him.**—This accounts for the present tense of the last verse. The whole is present to His mind as occurring forthwith.

<sup>(33)</sup> **Little children, yet a little while I am with you.**—The thought of His own glory brings with it the thought of their state of orphanage when He shall have departed from them, and He addresses them as "Little children," with a word of tenderness spoken only here by Him. The word impressed itself upon the mind of St. John, and it occurs elsewhere in the New Testament only in his First Epistle (ii. 1, 12, 28; iii. 7, 18; iv. 4; v. 21), and in an uncertain reading in the striking

words of St. Paul, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." (See Gal. iv. 19, and comp. Introduction, p. 7.)

For the remainder of the verse, see Notes on chaps. vii. 33, 34, and viii. 21.

<sup>(34)</sup> **A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another.**—There is no reference in the context to the Ten Commandments, and we are not therefore to seek the meaning of the "new commandment" in any more or less full contrast with them. They also taught that a man should love his neighbour as himself; and the fulfilment of the law is love. The contrast here is between what our Lord had said unto the Jews and what He now says to the disciples. He had said, and says again, "Whither I go ye cannot come." To the Jews he added, "Ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins" (chap. vii. 34, 35). For those who believe in Him, He has no such decree of separation, but a new and different commandment, by which His spiritual presence would be at once realised and proved. Love to one another, and therefore sacrifice of self for another's good, would be, in the truest sense, a realisation of His presence in their midst. (Comp. 1 John ii. 8.)

For the meaning of the word "commandment," comp. Note on chap. x. 18.

you, that ye also love one another. <sup>(35)</sup> By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

<sup>(36)</sup> Simon Peter said

unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. <sup>(37)</sup> Peter said

**As I have loved you.**—More exactly, *even as I loved you.* (Comp. Note on verse 1.) The punctuation of our version is to be maintained. It is not, as it has sometimes been read, "That ye love one another, as I have loved you . . ." The earlier clause gives the principle of the new commandment. The latter clause repeats this, and prefaces the repetition by words referring to His own acts of love, which should be an example for them. The word "as," or "even as," does not refer to the degree of His love, but to the fact; and the special instance of love then present to the mind was the feet-washing upon which the whole of this discourse has followed.

<sup>(35)</sup> **By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples.**—The thought of their state of orphanage when He should depart from them is still present. He gives them a bond of union, by which they should always be linked to Him and to each other in the principle of love. The followers of great Teachers and Rabbis had their distinctive marks. Here was the distinctive Christian mark, which all men should be able to read. It is instructive that the characteristic mark of Christianity should thus be asserted by its Founder to consist, not in any formulary or signs, but in the love which asserts the brotherhood of man. The apologists of the

first centuries delighted in appealing to the striking fact of the common love of Christians, which was a new thing in the history of mankind; and while the Church has sometimes forgotten the characteristic, the world never has. By their love for each other, for mankind, for God, it is known or denied that men who call themselves Christians are really Christ's disciples.

<sup>(36)</sup> **Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou?**—Comp. verse 33. The earnest, loving nature of the Apostle dwells upon the words which tell of the Master's departure. He is prepared to follow Him to danger, or even to death, and, that he may do so, asks whether it is that He is going.

**Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now.**—Our Lord does not give the answer which St. Peter had sought, but repeats the statement of verse 33. For St. Peter, as for the others, the place must be prepared and the way opened before they could follow (chap. xiv. 2). For him, as for his Master, the day's work was to be done before the night would come, and it was not done yet. But that night would come, and he would hereafter follow his Master in a more literal sense than any of which he thought. (See Notes on chap. xxi. 18, 19.)

<sup>(37)</sup> **Lord, why cannot I**

unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.<sup>a</sup> <sup>(38)</sup> Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto

<sup>a</sup> Matt.  
26. 33.  
A.D. 33.

thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

## CHAPTER XIV.—

<sup>(1)</sup> Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in

follow thee now?—True to his impulsive, self-confident character, St. Peter is impatient of the delay imposed upon him. He is ready, in the fulness of his love, now, and does not dream that in the moment of trial he will be found wanting.

<sup>(38)</sup> **Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake?**—Comp. for this phrase Note on chap. x. 11. The pronouns are emphatic, and there is a solemn emphasis in the repetition of what St. Peter had said. He was using words of which he knew not the full meaning. He spoke of laying down his life for his Lord. He would hereafter be able to follow, because his Lord would lay down His own life for him.

For the remainder of the verse, comp. Matt. xxvi. 34; Mark xiv. 30; and Luke xxii. 34.

## XIV.

<sup>(1)</sup> **Let not your heart be troubled.**—The division of chapters is unfortunate, as it breaks the close connection between these words and those which have gone immediately before. The prophecy of St. Peter's denial had followed upon the indication of Judas as the traitor, and upon the announcement of the Lord's departure. These thoughts may well have brought troubled hearts. The Lord had Himself been troubled as

the darkness drew on (chaps. xii. 27; xiii. 21), and He calms the anxious thoughts that He reads in the souls of the disciples.

**Ye believe in God, believe also in me.**—It is more natural to take both these clauses as imperative—*Believe in God, believe also in Me*. Our English version reads the first and last clauses of the verse as imperative, and the second as an indicative, but there is no good reason for doing so; and a sense more in harmony with the context is got by reading them all as imperatives. As a matter of fact, the present trouble of the hearts of the disciples arose from a want of a true belief in God; and the command is to exercise a true belief, and to realise the presence of the Father, as manifested in the person of the Son. There was a sense in which every Jew believed in God. That belief lay at the very foundation of the theocracy; but like all the axioms of creeds, it was accepted as a matter of course, and too often had no real power on the life. What our Lord here teaches the disciples is the reality of the Fatherhood of God as a living power, ever present with them and in them; and he teaches them that the love of God is revealed in the person of the Word made flesh. This faith is the simplest article of the Christian's

God, believe also in me.

(2) In my Father's house are

many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told

creed. We teach children to say, we ourselves constantly say, "I believe in God the Father." Did we but fully grasp the meaning of what we say, the troubles of our hearts would be hushed to silence: and our religion would be a real power over the whole life, and would be also, in a fulness in which it never has been, a real power over the life of the world.

(2) In my Father's house are many mansions.—The Greek word used for "house" here is slightly different from that used of the material temple on earth in chap. ii. 16. The exact meaning will be at once seen from a comparison of 2 Cor. v. 1, the only other passage in the New Testament where it is used metaphorically. The Jews were accustomed to the thought of heaven as the habitation of God; and the disciples had been taught to pray, "Our Father, which art in heaven." (Comp. Ps. xxiii. 13, 14; Isa. lxiii. 15; Matt. vi. 9; Acts vii. 49; and especially Heb. ix.)

The Greek word for "mansions" occurs again in the New Testament only in verse 23, where it is rendered "abode." Wyclif and the Geneva version read "dwellings." It is found in the Greek of the Old Testament only in 1 Macc. vii. 38 ("Suffer them not to continue any longer"—"give them not an abode"). Our translators here followed the Vulgate, which has "mansiones" with the exact meaning of the Greek, that is, "resting-places," "dwellings." In Elizabethan English the word meant no more than this, and it now means

no more in French or in the English of the North. A *maison* or a *manse*, is not necessarily a modern English mansion. It should also be noted that the Greek word is the substantive answering to the verb which is rendered "dwelleth" in verse 10, and "abide" in chap. xv. 4—10 (see Note there).

"Many" is not to be understood, as it often has been, simply or chiefly of different degrees of happiness in heaven. Happiness depends upon the mind which receives it, and must always exist, therefore, in varying degrees; but this is not the prominent thought expressed here, though it may be implied. The words refer rather to the extent of the Father's house, in which there should be abiding-places for all. There would be no risk of that house being overcrowded like the caravanserai at Bethlehem, or like those in which the Passover pilgrims, as at this very time, found shelter at Jerusalem. Though Peter could not follow Him now, he should hereafter (chap. xiii. 36); and for all who shall follow Him there shall be homes.

If it were not so, I would have told you.—These words are not without difficulty, but the simplest, and probably truest, meaning is obtained by reading them as our version does. They become then an appeal to our Lord's perfect candour in dealing with the disciples. He had revealed to them a Father and a house. That revelation implies a home for all. Were there not "many mansions" the fulness of His teaching could have had no place. Had there been

you. I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>(3)</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself ;

that where I am, *there ye* may be also. <sup>(4)</sup> And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. <sup>(5)</sup> Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know

limitations He must have marked them out.

**I go to prepare a place for you.**—The better MSS. read, “For I . . .,” connecting the clause with the earlier part of the verse. He is going away to prepare a place for them; and this also proves the existence of the home. There is to be then no separation; He is to enter within the veil, but it is to be as Forerunner on our behalf (Heb. vi. 20). “When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.”

**(3) And if I go and prepare . . .**—For the form of the expression, comp. Notes on chap. xii. 32, and 1 John ii. 28. It does not imply uncertainty, but expresses that the fact is in the region of the future, which is clear to Him, and will unfold itself to them.

**I will come again, and receive you unto myself.**—This clause has been variously explained of the resurrection; of the death of individual disciples; of the spiritual presence of our Lord in the Church; of the coming again of the Lord in the *Parousia* of the last day, when all who believe in Him shall be received unto Himself. The difficulty has arisen from taking the words, “I will come again,” as necessarily referring to the same time as those which follow—“I will receive you unto Myself,” whereas they are in the present tense, and should be literally rendered, *I am coming*

again. They refer rather, as the same words refer when used in verse 18, to His constant spiritual presence in their midst; whereas the reception of them to Himself is to be understood of the complete union which will accompany that spiritual presence; a union which will be commenced in this life, advanced by the death of individuals, and completed in the final coming again. (Comp. chap. xvii. 24.)

**(4) And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.**—The better reading is, *And whither I go, ye know the way*, i.e., “Ye know that I am the way to the Father, whither I am going.” (Comp. verse 6, and chap. xiii. 33.) They did not, indeed, fully know this, but the means of knowing it was within their reach, and His own words had declared it. (Comp., e.g., chaps. x. 1 and xi. 25.) They ought to have known it, and His words now are meant to contrast what they ought to have known with what they really did know, in order that He may more fully instruct them. To know our ignorance is the first step to its removal.

**(5) Thomas saith unto him.**—Comp., for the character of Thomas, chaps. xi. 16; xx. 24; xxi. 2.

**Lord, we know not whither thou goest.**—Our Lord’s words had laid stress upon the “way.” Thomas lays stress upon the “whither.” His mind seeks for

not whither thou goest ; and how can we know the way ? <sup>(6)</sup> Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life : no man

cometh unto the Father, but by me. <sup>(7)</sup> If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also : and from henceforth ye

measured certainty. In all that he has heard of the Father's house of many mansions, of being with the Lord, there is much that he cannot understand. The Messiah, they thought, was to reign upon earth. Where was this vast royal home, with dwelling-places for all, to which Christ was going first, and to which they were to follow ? They knew not whither, and without that knowledge they cannot even think of the way.

<sup>(6)</sup> **I am the way.**—The pronoun is emphatic, “*I, and none besides Me.*” “The way” is again made prominent, reversing the order which Thomas had used. He and He only is the means through which men can approach to the Father. (Comp. Note on chap. i. 18, and see 1 Tim. ii. 5.)

**The truth, and the life.**—*Better, and the Truth, and the Life.* The thought of His being the Way through which men come to the Father is the reverse side of the thought that in Him the Father is revealed to men, that He is Himself the Eternal Truth, that He is Himself the source of eternal life. (Comp. chaps. i. 14, 17; vi. 50, 51; xi. 25, 26.) Had they known what His earlier words meant, they would have had other than temporal and local thoughts of the Father's house, and would have known Him to be the Way.

**No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**—This was the answer to the doubt of Thomas.

This was the true “whither” which they knew not. The thought of heaven is not of a place far above, or of a time far before, but of a state now and hereafter. To receive the Truth and the Life revealed in the presence of the Son is to come to the Father by the only Way. To be with the Father is home. (Comp. Notes on chap. i. 18, and iii. 13.)

<sup>(7)</sup> **If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.**—The thought here is made quite plain by what has preceded ; but the form in which it is expressed demands attention. The emphasis of the first part of the sentence is not upon “Me” as is generally supposed, but upon “known.” In the second part the emphatic words are “My Father.” The English word “known” represents two Greek words in the better text which are not identical in meaning. The former means, to know by observation, the latter to know by reflection. It is the difference between *connaitre* and *savoir* ; between *kennen* (ken, k(e)now), and *wissen* (wit, wisdom). We may express the meaning more exactly thus, “If ye had recognised me, ye would have known My Father also.” If ye had recognised who I really am, ye would have known that I and my Father are one.

**And from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.**—Comp. chap. xiii. 31, where the glorifying of the Son of Man

know him, and have seen him. <sup>(8)</sup> Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. <sup>(9)</sup> Jesus saith unto him,

Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip ? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father ; and how sayest

is regarded as in the future which is immediately present. He can, therefore, say that from this time onwards, after the full declaration of Himself in verses 6 and 9 *et seq.*, they know and have seen the Father.

**(8) Philip saith unto him.**—Comp. for the character of Philip chaps. i. 44 *et seq.*; vi. 5 *et seq.*; xii. 21 *et seq.* He is joined with Thomas at the head of the second group of the Apostles, in Acts i. 13.

**Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.**—He catches at the word "seen" and thinks of some revelation of the glory of God as that vouchsafed to Moses, or it may be of a vision like that which three of their number had seen, and of which others had heard, in the Mount of Transfiguration. One such vision of the Father, he thinks, would remove all their doubts; and would satisfy the deepest longings of their hearts.

**(9) Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip ?**—More exactly, . . . *hast thou not recognised Me*, as in verse 7. Comp. the reference in verse 8, from which it will be seen that Philip was one of the first-called disciples, and had occupied a prominent position in the band of Apostles. There is in our Lord's words a tone of sadness and of warning. They utter the loneliness of a holiness and greatness which is not understood. The close of life is at hand, and Philip,

who had followed Him from the first, shows by this question that he did not even know what the work and purposes of that life had been. They speak to all Christian teachers, thinkers, workers. There is a possibility that men should be in the closest apparent nearness to Christ, and yet have never learnt the meaning of the words they constantly hear and utter; and have never truly known the purpose of Christ's life.

**He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.**—Comp. Note on verse 7, and Philip's own answer to Nathanael, "Come and see" (chap. i. 46). The demand of Philip is one which is constantly being read, and the answer is one that constantly holds good. Men are ever thinking and saying, "Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us." "Give us something in religion upon which the soul can rest. We are weary of the doubts, and strifes, and dogmas which are too often called religion. We want something which can be real food for the soul. We cannot feed upon the husks which the swine do eat; and we believe that in the Father's house therero is, even for the hired servants, bread enough and to spare. We are not irreligious, but we are impatient of what is put before us as religion. Give us truth ! Give us life ! Let it be free and open as the air of heaven, and we will gladly accept it, embrace it, live it." All this is

thou *then*, Shew us the Father? <sup>(10)</sup> Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth

in me, he doeth the works. <sup>(11)</sup> Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. <sup>(12)</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth

the heart of the child seeking the presence of the Father. That Father has been manifested in the person of the Son. In the Life and Truth revealed in Him is the full revelation of God. In Him is the Bread of Life to satisfy every want of every man. He that hath seen Him hath seen the Father. How then can men say, "Shew us the Father?" (Comp. Note on chap. xii. 44, 45.)

**(10) Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?**—Comp. Note on chap. x. 38. He had there taught this truth to the Jews; but Philip's words seem to show that even the disciples did not fully receive it. The order of the clauses is reversed here, in accordance with the thought of the context, which is of knowledge of the Son, and of the Father through the Son.

**The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself.**—This refers not to His present teaching only or chiefly, but to the whole of His manifestation of the character and attributes of God. All His words had been a revelation of the Father whom Philip now asks to see. (Comp. chap. viii. 38.)

**But the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.**—The better reading is, *but the Father that dwelleth in Me*

*doeth His own works.* This is the proof that He does not speak of Himself; and both clauses are together the proof of the indwelling of the Son in the Father, and the Father in the Son. The works manifested in time in the power of the Incarnate Word are not His works, but those of the Father, who abides in the Son, and is revealed through Him. (Comp. chap. viii. 28, and Note there.)

**(11) Believe me that I am in the Father.**—He passes now from Philip, and addresses Himself to the whole body of the Apostles. He claims from them a personal trust in Himself, which should accept His statement that He and the Father were immanent in each other.

**Or else believe me for the very works' sake.**—If they cannot receive the truth on the testimony of His word, He will take lower ground with them. He will place before them the evidence He had placed before the Jews. Let them, if they will not hear Him, believe on account of the very works which He had done. (Comp. Note on chaps. v. 19, 20, and x. 37, 38.)

**(12) Verily, verily, I say unto you.**—Comp. Note on chap. i. 51.

**He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he**

on me, the works that I do shall he do also ; and greater *works* than these shall he do ; because I go

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 7.  
7.

unto my Father. <sup>(13)</sup> And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do,<sup>a</sup> that the Father may be

**do also.**—He that by faith becomes one with the Son shall have the Son, and therefore also the Father, dwelling in him (verses 11, 20, 23), and shall himself become an instrument through which God, who dwelleth in him, shall carry into effect His own works. He shall, therefore, do works of the same kind as those which the Son Himself doeth.

**And greater works than these shall he do.**—Comp. Notes on chap. v. 20, and see Matt. xxi. 21, 22. The explanation of these greater works is not to be sought in the individual instances of miraculous power exercised by the Apostles, but in the whole work of the Church. The Day of Pentecost witnessed the first fulfilment of this prophecy ; but it has been fulfilled also in every great moral and spiritual victory. Every revival of a truly religious spirit has been an instance of it ; every mission-field has been a witness to it. In every child of man brought to see the Father, and know the Father's love as revealed in Jesus Christ, there has been a work such as He did. In the world-wide extent of Christianity there is a work greater even than any which He Himself did in the flesh. He left His kingdom as one of the smallest of the influences on the earth ; but it has grown up as a mighty power over all the kingdoms of the world, and all that is purest and best in civilisation and culture has found shelter in its branches.

**Because I go unto my Father.**—The better reading is, *because I go unto the Father*. The words are to be connected not with one clause only, but with all the earlier parts of the verse. They are the reason why the believer shall do the works that Christ does, as well as the reason why he shall do greater works. The earthly work of Christ will have ceased, and He will have gone to the Father. The believers will be then His representatives on earth, as He will be their representative in heaven. Therefore will they do His works, and the works shall be greater because He will be at the Father's right hand, and will do whatsoever they shall ask in His name.

**(13) And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do.**—Comp. chaps. xv. 16, and xvi. 23. The prayer is thought of as addressed to the Father ; but the answer here, and still more emphatically in the following verse, is thought of as coming from the Son, who is one with the Father. The width and limitation of the promise are both to be noted. It is “*whatsoever ye shall ask*,” and it is “*ask in My name*.” This means, as My representatives on earth (comp. Notes on previous verse), as persons doing My work, living in My spirit, seeking as I have sought to do the will of the Father. It follows from this that personal petitions are not contemplated here, except as far as they are for

glorified in the Son. <sup>(14)</sup> If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

<sup>(15)</sup> If ye love me, keep

my commandments. <sup>(16)</sup> And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may

the glory of God; and that petitions asked in ignorance may be most truly answered when they are not granted. The prayer of Gethsemane—"If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done," should teach what prayer in the name and spirit of Christ means. We commonly attach to our prayers, "through Jesus Christ our Lord." We do not always bear in mind that this implies an absolute self-sacrifice, and is a prayer that our very prayers may not be answered except in so far as they are in accordance with the divine will. (Comp. 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.)

**That the Father may be glorified in the Son.**—Comp. Notes on chaps. xi. 4; xii. 28; xiii. 31.

<sup>(14)</sup> **If ye shall ask anything in my name.**—This is an emphatic repetition of the width of the promise and of its condition. In the second clause of the verse the pronoun "I" bears the stress. "I (on My part) will do it." In the parallel passage in chaps. xv. 16 and xvi. 23 the Father is thought of as answering the prayer. The passage from one thought to the other is possible, because the Father and Son are thought of as one.

<sup>(15)</sup> **If ye love me, keep my commandments.**—Comp. Notes on verse 17; chap. xiii. 34, and xv. 10. The connection here is through the condition "in My name," which includes willing obedience to His

commands. The word "My" is emphatic—"The commandments which ye have received from Me." Those of this last discourse are perhaps prominent in the thought.

<sup>(16)</sup> **And I will pray the Father.**—Comp. Note on chap. xvi. 26. The pronoun is again emphatic—"I have given you your part to do. I on My part will pray the Father." The word used for "pray" is one which implies more of nearness of approach and of familiarity than that which is rendered "ask" in verse 14. It is the word which John regularly uses when he speaks of our Lord as praying to the Father, and occurs again in chaps. xvi. 26; xvii. 9, 15, 20. The distinction is important, but it has sometimes, perhaps, been unduly pressed. Both words occur in 1 John v. 16.

**And he shall give you another Comforter.**—The better rendering is probably *another Advocate*. The word is used of the third person in the Holy Trinity here, and in verse 26, and in chaps. xv. 26, and xvi. 7. In each of these instances it is used by our Lord. It is found once again in the New Testament, and is there applied by St. John to our Lord Himself (1 John ii. 1). In the Gospel the English version uniformly translates it by "Comforter." In the Epistle it is rendered by "Advocate." But the whole question is of so much interest and importance that it will be convenient to deal with it in a

abide with you for ever ;  
<sup>(17)</sup> even the Spirit of truth ;  
whom the world cannot re-  
ceive, because it seeth him  
not, neither knoweth him :

<sup>1 Or,</sup>  
*orphans.*

but ye know him ; for he  
dwelleth with you, and  
shall be in you. <sup>(18)</sup> I will  
not leave you comfortless :  
I will come to you. <sup>(19)</sup> Yet

separate Note. (Comp. *Excursus H* : *The Meaning of the word Paraclete.*) The word “another” should be observed as implying that which the Epistle states—the advocacy of the second Person in the Trinity, as well as that of the third.

**That he may abide with you for ever.**—The thought of the permanent abiding is opposed to the separation which is about to take place between them and the person of our Lord. He would come again to them in the person of the Paraclete, whom He would send to them (verse 18), and this spiritual presence should remain with them for ever. (Comp. Matt. xxviii. 20.)

<sup>(17)</sup> **Even the Spirit of truth.**—Comp. chaps. xv. 26, and xvi. 13, and 1 John v. 6. He is called the Spirit of Truth, because part of His special office is to bring truth home to the hearts of men, to carry it from the material to the moral sphere, to make it something more than a collection of signs seen or heard—a living power in living men.

**Whom the world cannot receive.**—The Holy Spirit can be received only by those who have the spiritual faculty. It cannot be otherwise. The unbelieving world, caring only for things of the senses, has lost its spiritual perception. It has no eye to see and no heart to know spiritual things, for they are spiritually discerned. (Comp. 1 Cor. ii. 14.)

**But ye know him ; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.**—The better text is, . . . and is in you. The verbs are in the present tense, describing the receptivity of the disciples as opposed to the moral blindness of the world. They had, during our Lord’s work and teaching in their midst, exercised and strengthened their spiritual faculties. They had in part received the Spirit, and by that reception were prepared for the fuller gift. They knew Him. He was in their midst. He was then, and therefore should be in the future, a living power, dwelling in their inmost life.

<sup>(18)</sup> **I will not leave you comfortless.**—Better with the margin, *I will not leave you orphans*, which exactly represents the Greek word. “Comfortless” is unfortunate, as it suggests a connection with “Comforter” which does not exist in the original. Our translators have rendered the word by “fatherless” in James i. 27, which is the only other passage where it occurs in the New Testament, and Wiclif has “faderless” here. He thinks of them as His children whom He is leaving in the world (comp. chap. xiii. 33), but He will not leave them destitute and bereaved.

**I will come to you.**—This coming, as is shown by the whole context, is the spiritual presence in the person of the Paraclete.

<sup>(19)</sup> **Yet a little while.**—Comp. chaps. xiii. 33 and xvi. 16.

a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. <sup>(20)</sup> At that day ye shall know that I

am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. <sup>(21)</sup> He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and

**But ye see me.**—*i.e.*, in the spiritual presence of the Paraclete. The words may indeed have their first fulfilment in the appearances of the forty days (comp. Acts x. 41), but these appearances were themselves steps in the education which was leading the disciples from a trust in the physical to a trust in the spiritual presence. (Comp. chap. xx. 17.) To the world the grave seemed the closing scene. They saw Him no more; they thought of Him as dead. To the believers who had the power to see Him He appeared as living, and in very deed was more truly with them and in them than He had been before.

**Because I live, ye shall live also.**—Better, *for I live, and ye shall live.* Our Lord speaks of His own life in the present. It is the essential life of which He is Himself the Source, and which is not affected by the physical death through which He is about to pass. They also who believe in Him shall have even here this principle of life, which in them too shall be affected by no change, but shall develop into the fulness of the life hereafter. Because he lives, and because they too shall live, therefore shall they see Him and realise His presence when the world seeth Him no more.

**(20) At that day ye shall know**—*i.e.*, the day of the gift of the Comforter, in whom Christ shall come to them. In the first

reference the Day of Pentecost is meant, but the words hold good of every spiritual quickening, and will hold good of the final coming in the last day. The pronoun “ye” is emphatic—“Ye shall know for yourselves.”

**That I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.**—Comp. Note on chap. x. 38. The result of this spiritual illumination would be that they should of themselves know the immanence of the Son in the Father, and their own union with the Father through Him. They ask now (verse 8) for a manifestation of the Father. The Spirit should so bring the life of Christ to their hearts that they would read in it the manifestation of the Father, and feel that in and through that life their own spirit has communion with God. The Spirit would witness with their spirit that they were the children of God. They would seek no longer for a Theophany from without, but in the depth of their inmost lives would cry, “Abba, Father.”

**(21) He that hath my commandments.**—Comp. verse 15 and chap. v. 36. This verse points out the successive degrees which led up to the full manifestation of Christ. The first step is the moral apprehension and practical observance of our Lord’s commandments, which necessarily result from love to Christ.

**He it is that loveth me.**—

he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. <sup>(22)</sup> Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou

wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? <sup>(23)</sup> Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love

The next step is the special receptivity of the Father's love which he who loves Christ possesses, and therefore there is a special sense in which the Father loves him. The words express with fulness of emphasis, "He it is, and he only."

**And I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.**—The special love of the Son follows from the special love of the Father, and is accompanied by the full manifestation of the Son. This is further explained in verse 23.

**(22) Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot.**—That he was "not Iscariot" is mentioned to distinguish him beyond all possibility of confusion from him who had gone out into the darkness, and was no longer one of their number (chap. xiii. 30). He is commonly identified with "Lebbæus whose surname was Thaddæus" (comp. Matt. x. 3), and was a brother or son of James (Luke vi. 15).

**How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?**—The word "manifest" has brought to the mind of Judas, as the word "see" had to the mind of Philip (verse 7), thoughts of a visible manifestation such as to Moses (Ex. xxxiii. 13, 18), and such as they expected would attend the advent of the Messiah (Mal. iii. 1). But it was contrary to every thought of the Messiah that this manifestation should be to a few only. His reign

was to be the judgment of the Gentiles, and the establishment of the Theocracy.

The words rendered, "How is it that . . . ?" mean literally, *What has happened that . . . ?* The words of our Lord, speaking of His manifestation, take Judas by surprise. He wonders whether anything has occurred to cause what he thinks a departure from the Messianic manifestation.

**(23) If a man love me, he will keep my words.**—Our Lord repeats the condition necessary on the part of man in order that the manifestation of God to him may be possible. This is an answer to the question of Judas. The world in its unbelief and rejection of Christ's words, and without the spirit of love, could not receive that manifestation.

**We will come unto him, and make our abode with him.**—For the plural, comp. Note on chap. x. 30. For the word "abode," comp. Note on verse 2. The thought of God as dwelling in the sanctuary and among the people was familiar to the disciples from the Old Testament Scriptures (see, e.g., Ex. xxv. 8; xxix. 45; Lev. xxvi. 11, 12; Ezek. xxxvii. 26), and the thought of the spiritual temple in the heart of man was not unknown to contemporary writers. Philo has a remarkable parallel in his treatise, *De Cherubim*, p. 124: "Since therefore He (God) thus

nim, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. <sup>(24)</sup> He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings : and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

<sup>(25)</sup> These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. <sup>(26)</sup> But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all

invisibly enters into the region of the soul, let us prepare that place, in the best way the case admits of, to be an abode worthy of God ; for if we do not, He, without our being aware of it, will quit us and migrate to some other habitation which shall appear to Him to be more excellently provided" (Bohn's ed., vol. i., p. 199. See the whole of chap. xxix.). Schöttgen, in his note, quotes from a Rabbinical writer who says, "Blessed is the man who strives daily to make himself approved unto God, and prepares himself to receive the divine guest." (Comp. 1 Cor. iii. 16 ; vi. 19 ; and Rev. iii. 20.)

<sup>(24)</sup> **H**e that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings.—He has shown in the previous verse how the Father and the Son can take up their abode in the hearts of the believers. He now shows why they could not be manifested to the hearts of the world. He that loveth not Christ keepeth not His word, and that word is the Father's. He has rejected the love of God which is revealed in the Son, and has Himself closed the channels of communion with God. God cannot dwell with him because there is in him nothing which can be receptive of the Divine Presence.

<sup>(25)</sup> **T**hese things have I spoken unto you, being yet pre-

**s**ent with you. — Better, . . . while abiding with you. He was about to depart from them. He had been speaking to them words which they found it hard to understand. He now pauses in His teaching, and proceeds to tell them of the Holy Spirit who should interpret His words to them.

<sup>(26)</sup> **B**ut the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost.—Better, as before, *but the Advocate* . . . (Comp. *Excursus H: The meaning of the word Paraclete.*) For the words "Holy Ghost" comp. chaps. vii. 39 and xx. 22, which are the only passages where we find them in this Gospel. They are frequent in the earlier Gospels. (Compare, e.g., Matt. xii. 31.) In four passages in the New Testament (Luke xi. 3; Eph. i. 13; iv. 30; 1 Thess. iv. 8) our translators have preferred the rendering "Holy Spirit." The identification here with the Advocate brings out the contrast between the practical obedience and holiness (verse 23) of those to whom the Holy Spirit should be sent, and the disobedience (verse 24) of those who rejected the revelation by the Son.

**W**hom the Father will send in my name—*i.e.*, as My representative. (Comp. verse 13.) Their Master will depart from them, but the Father will send them another

things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. <sup>(27)</sup> Peace I leave with you, my peace

I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it

Teacher who will make clear to them the lessons they have already heard, and teach them things which they cannot bear now.

**He shall teach you all things.**—Comp. chap. xvi. 13. The words are here without an expressed limitation, but the “all things” here is equal to the “all truth” in the later passage.

**And bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.**—The limitation, “whatsoever I have said unto you,” is to be taken with this clause only, and is not to be extended to the words, “He shall teach you all things.” For instances of the recurrence of words spoken by our Lord with a fulness of new meaning revealed in them by the Holy Spirit, comp. chaps. ii. 22 and xii. 16. The Gospel according to St. John, with its full records of the words spoken by our Lord, is itself a commentary on this text.

**(27) Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.**—The immediate context speaks of His departure from them (verses 25 and 28), and it is natural therefore to understand these words as suggested by the common Oriental formulas of leave-taking. Men said to each other when they met and parted, “Shalom! Shalom!” (Peace! Peace!) just as they say the “Salaam! Salaam!” in our own day. (See 1 Sam. i. 17; Luke vii. 50; Acts xvi. 36; Jas. ii. 16; Eph. vi. 23; 1 Pet. v. 14; 3 John 15.)

He will leave them as a legacy the gift of “peace.” And this peace is more than a meaningless sound or even than a true wish. He repeats it with the emphatic “My,” and speaks of it as an actual possession which he imparts to them. “Peace on earth” was the angels’ message when they announced His birth; “peace to you” was His own greeting when He returned victorious from the grave. “He is our peace” (Eph. ii. 14), and this peace is the farewell gift to the disciples from whom He is now departing. (Comp. chaps. xiv. 27; xvi. 33; xx. 19, 21, 26.)

**Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.**—The contrast is not between the emptiness of the world’s salutations and the reality of His own gift, but between His legacy to them and the legacies ordinarily left by the world. He gives them not land or houses or possessions, but “peace;” and that “His own peace,” “the peace of God which passeth all understanding.”

**Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**—These are in part the words of the first verse, and are now repeated as a joyous note of triumph. Possessing the peace which He gives them, having another Advocate in the person of the Holy Spirit, having the Father and the Son ever abiding in them, there cannot be, even when He is about to leave them, room for trouble or for fear.

be afraid. <sup>(28)</sup> Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come *again* unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father:

for my Father is greater than I. <sup>(29)</sup> And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

The word here rendered “be afraid” occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It points especially to the cowardice of fear. The cognate substantive is used in 2 Tim. i. 7, and the adjective in Matt. viii. 26; Mark iv. 40; and Rev. xxi. 8.

**(28) Ye have heard how I said unto you.**—Better, *Ye heard how I said unto you.* (See verses 19 and 20.)

**If ye loved me, ye would rejoice.**—True love seeks another’s good and not its own. Their sorrow at His departure was at its root selfish, as all sorrow for those who depart to be with God is, however little we think so. His departure would be the return to the glory of the Father’s throne, and was matter for joy and not for sorrow. For them also it was expedient. (Comp. Notes on chap. xvi. 6, 7.)

**For my Father is greater than I.**—These words have naturally formed the subject of controversy in every period of the Church’s history, between those who deny and those who accept the truth that the Son is “very God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before all worlds.” And, as in all controversies, statements have been made on either side which cannot be supported by the words themselves. On the part of those who assert the divine nature, it has been contended that the

Father is greater than the Son only as regards the human nature of the Son; but this is not here thought of. In this passage, as in others of the New Testament, it is plainly asserted that in the divine nature there is a subordination of the Son to the Father. (See, e.g., verse 16; chap. xvii. 5; 1 Cor. iii. 23; xi. 3; xv. 27, 28; Phil. ii. 9, 11; and especially Note on chap. v. 19 *et seq.*) On the part of those who deny the divinity of our Lord, it has been contended that this text asserts the inferiority of His nature to that of the Father, whereas the words could only have been uttered by one who meant in them to assert His own divine essence. If we try to imagine a man saying “God is greater than I,” we feel at once that He who really said them claimed for Himself that He was truly God.

**(29) And now I have told you before it come to pass.**—Comp. chap. xiii. 19. Here, again, He tells them the event before the accomplishment, that it may serve to strengthen their faith. Two interpretations of this verse are possible. (1) That He told them of the coming of the Advocate to teach all truth, and bring all things to their remembrance, in order that in the fulfilment of this they may, with increase of faith, believe in Him. (2) That He told them of His going to the Father, in order that when the

(<sup>30</sup>) Hereafter I will not talk much with you : for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. (<sup>31</sup>) But that the

world may know that I love the Father ; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

hour of departure came they may believe that He had gone to the Father. Upon the whole, and especially considering the close parallel with chap. xiii. 29, the first seems the more probable meaning.

(<sup>30</sup>) Hereafter I will not talk much with you.—Better, *I will no more, or I will not continue to talk much with you.* The discourse is broken by the thought that the hour of the conflict is at hand, and that He must go forth to meet it.

For the prince of this world cometh.—Better, *is coming.* The approach is thought of as then taking place. For the phrase, “prince of this world,” comp. Note on chap. xii. 81. The prince of evil is here regarded as working in and by Judas, who is carrying out his plans and doing his work. (Comp. Notes on chaps. vi. 70 and xiii. 2, 27.)

And hath nothing in me.—The words are to be taken in their full and absolute meaning, and they assert that the prince of this world possesses nothing in the person of Christ. In Him he has never for a moment ruled. For this appeal to perfect sinlessness, comp. Note on chap. viii. 29. It follows from this that His surrender of Himself is entirely voluntary. (Comp. Note on chap. x. 18.)

(<sup>31</sup>) The most probable arrangement of this verse is to omit the period after “so I do,” and to con-

sider all down to this point as governed by “that.” We shall read then, “But, that the world may know that I love the Father, and that as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do, arise, let us go hence.” He has asserted, in the previous verse, the sinlessness which makes His act wholly self-determined. He now expresses the subordination of His own to the Father’s will, and summons the Apostles to rise up with Him from the table, and go forth from the room.

But that the world . . .—The words seem to point back to “the prince of this world” who has just been mentioned. The prince cometh, but it is to a defeat; and the very world over which he has ruled will see in the self-sacrifice of Jesus the love of the Father. That love will reclaim them from the bondage of the oppressor and restore them to the freedom of children.

It is an interesting question which we cannot hope with certainty to solve, whether or not in obedience to the command they went from the room at once. In other words, were the discourse of chaps. xv. and xvi., and the prayer of chap. xvii., uttered in the room after the summons to depart, or on the way to the garden of Gethsemane? The immediate connection of the opening words of the next chapter with the present verse naturally leads to the opinion that

CHAPTER XV.—| A.D. 33. | <sup>(1)</sup> I am the true vine, and

they were spoken in the same place, and, in the absence of any hint of a change, it is safe not to assume any. The words of chap. xviii. 1 are probably those which express the act to which the words our Lord has just spoken summon them.

## XV.

[(2) THE LAST WORDS OF DEEPEST MEANING TO THE FAITHFUL FEW (*continued*).

(e) *Relation of Jesus and His disciples to each other; and to the world* (chap. xv. 1—27).

(a) Their union with Him.  
The True Vine: union from within (verses 1—11). Comp. the Good Shepherd (chap. x.); union from without.

(b) Their union with each other (verses 12—17).

(γ) The hatred of the world (verses 18—24):  
The reason of it (verses 18—21);  
The sinfulness of it (verses 22—25).

(δ) The witness to the world (verses 26, 27):  
By the Paraclete (verse 26);  
By the disciples (verse 27).]

(1) **I am the true vine.**—For the word “true,” comp. Note on chap. i. 9. The ideal truth, of which the natural vine is a figure, is fulfilled in Him. The thought is introduced suddenly, and with nothing in the context to lead up to it. The natural explanation of this is, that here, as in other in-

stances, it was suggested by some external object which met the eye. If we suppose (comp. Note on chap. xiv. 31) that they were crossing the valley on the way to Gethsemane, there is reason for the idea that they passed a vineyard, which supplied the form in which our Lord’s thoughts are expressed; but the journey itself, during the discourse, is improbable; and the sight of a vineyard is the less likely, as it was night. On the supposition that they were still in the room where they had eaten supper, a vine whose tendrils grew into the room, or the vine carved on the doors of the Temple (*Jos. Wars*, v. 5, § 4; *Ant. xv.* 11, § 3), or the vineyards seen in the distance by moonlight, or the vine suggested by “the fruit of the vine” of which they had drunk, have been suggested. Of these the last has most probability, as bound up with the significance of the cup of which they had drunk that night. We cannot say more than this. The imagery may have followed from some incident, or custom, or remark, now wholly unknown to us. It was, as in the case of the Good Shepherd, familiar to them from the Old Testament, and would have come to their minds from any slight suggestion. (See, e.g., the following passages: Ps. lxxx. 8—19.; Is. v. 1 *et seq.*; Jer. ii. 21; Ezek. xix. 10.) It seems to have been expressed also in Rabbinic precepts, e.g., “Who-soever dreameth of a vine-branch shall see the Messiah.” (*Berachoth*, fol. 89.)

**And my Father is the husbandman.**—Comp. Matt. xxi. 33

my Father is the husbandman. <sup>(2)</sup> Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: <sup>a</sup> and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 15. 13.  
<sup>b</sup> ch. 13  
10.

<sup>(3)</sup> Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. <sup>b</sup> <sup>(4)</sup> Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more

*et seq.*; Mark xii. 1 *et seq.*; Luke xx. 9 *et seq.* The thought here is of the owner of the vine, who himself cultivates and trains it.

<sup>(2)</sup> Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.—The two chief duties of the vine-dresser, cutting off all fruitless tendrils, and cleansing those that bear fruit, supply illustrations of the training of human souls by the Divine Husbandman. We are not to interpret these words, as they frequently have been interpreted, of the unbelieving world, or of the Jews; but of Christians in name, who claim to be branches of the true vine. These the Husbandman watcheth day by day; He knoweth them, and readeth the inner realities of their lives, and every one that is fruitless He taketh away.

And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it.—Better, *he cleanseth it.* (Comp. Heb. i. 3.) This means in the natural vine the cutting off of shoots which run to waste, and the removal of every excrescence which hinders the growth of the branch. It means in the spiritual training the checking of natural impulses and affections, and the removal of everything, even though it be by a pang sharp as the edge of the pruner's knife, which can misdirect or weaken the energy of

the spiritual life, and thus diminish its fruitfulness. A vine which has been pruned—here a tendril cut off, and there one bent back—here a shoot that seemed of fairest promise to the unskilled eye unsparingly severed by the vine-dresser, who sees it is worthless—here a branch, in itself good, made to yield its place to one that is better, and itself trained to fill another place—such is the familiar picture of the natural vine—such, also, to a wisdom higher than ours, is the picture of human life.

<sup>(3)</sup> Now ye are clean.—Better, *Already are ye clean.* The pronoun is emphatic. “Already are ye, as distinct from others who will become clean in the future.” (Comp. Note on chap. xiii. 10.)

Through the word which I have spoken unto you.—Better, *on account of the word which I have spoken unto you.* The word was the revelation of God to them, and by reason of its moral power they had been cleansed. We are not to limit the reference to chap. xiii. 10, but are to understand it of our Lord's whole teaching. (See chaps. v. 24; viii. 31, 32; xii. 48; xvii. 10; and comp. Eph. v. 26.)

<sup>(4)</sup> Abide in me, and I in you.—The clauses are here connected as cause and effect. The second is the promise, which will not fail if the command of the first

can ye, except ye abide in me. <sup>(5)</sup> I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in

<sup>1</sup> Or,  
severed  
from  
me.

him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without<sup>1</sup> me ye can do nothing. <sup>(6)</sup> If a man abide not in

be observed. The union then, and all that follows from it, is placed within the power of the human will. All is contained in the words, "Abide in Me." He who obeys this command has Christ abiding in him, and is a fruitful branch of the true vine.

**As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself.**—The branch regarded of itself, apart from ("except it abide in") the vine, has no original source of life. The sap flows from the vine to branch and tendril and leaf and fruit. The branch of itself is a lifeless organ, and only fulfils its functions when it is connected with the vine. So in the spiritual life, men apart from Christ have no original source of life and fruitfulness. The true life flows from Him to every branch that abides in Him, quickening by its power the whole man, and making him fruitful in good. The man who lives without faith in God may be said to exist, rather than to live, and misses the true aim of his being.

**(5) I am the vine, ye are the branches.**—The first clause is repeated to bring out the contrast with the second. It has been implied, but not directly stated, that they are the branches. It may be that there was a pause after the end of the fourth verse, accompanied by a look at the disciples, or at that which suggested the imagery of the vine. His words would then continue with the sense, "Yes, it is so. That is the true

relation between us. I am the vine, ye are the branches. The fruitful branches represent men that abide in Me . . ."

**For without me ye can do nothing.**—Better, *separate from Me*, or, *apart from Me*. (Comp. margin.) The words bring out the fulness of the meaning of the fruitfulness of the man who abides in Christ. It is he, and he only, who brings forth fruit, for the man who is separate from Christ can bear no fruit. The words have often been unduly pressed, to exclude all moral power apart from Christ, whereas the whole context limits them to the fruit-bearing of the Christian life. The persons thought of all through this allegory are true and false Christians, and nothing is said of the influence on men, of the wider teaching of God, the Light of the Logos ever in the world. A moral power outside the limits of Christianity is clearly recognised in the New Testament. (Comp., e.g., Rom. ii. 14, 15.)

**(6) If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch . . .** The thought passes from the fruitful to the sterile branch, from the man who abideth to the man who will not abide in Christ. In the natural vineyard such a branch was cast forth, and then withered, and was gathered with others into bundles, and burned. The vivid picture illustrates the fearful history of a man who willetteth not to abide in Christ.

**And they are burned.—**

me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned. <sup>(7)</sup> If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask

what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. <sup>(8)</sup> Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. <sup>(9)</sup> As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you:

*Better, and they burn.* The tenses of this verse should be carefully observed. The burning of the withered branches of the natural vine suggests the final judgment, and the whole is thought of from that time. Hence the earlier verbs are in the past, and the later in the present tense.

**(7) If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you . . .**—He is now passing from the figure, which recurs again only in verses 8 and 16. We should have expected here, “and I abide in you” (verse 4); but His abiding in them necessarily accompanies their abiding in Him. The abiding of His words in them is the means by which, and the proof that they do abide in Him. (Comp. chap. xiv. 15, 23, 24).

**Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.**—The reading is not certain, but the first verb should probably be imperative, “Ask what ye will . . .” The promise in all its width is the same as that in chap. xiv. 13, 14 (see Note there), and it is attended by the same condition, for they who abide in Christ, and in whom Christ’s words abide, cannot pray otherwise than in His name.

**(8) Herein is my Father glorified.**—This clause is generally understood of the words which follow as it is taken in our English

version, but the rendering is liable to the objection that it gives a forced meaning to the word “that” (*τινα*), which is properly used to express purpose. We may here (as in chaps. iv. 37 and xvi. 30) take “herein” to refer to the words which have gone before. By so doing we give a natural meaning to the words, and get a satisfactory sense for the sentence. The thought then will be, “In this doing whatever ye ask, my Father is glorified, in order that ye may bear much fruit, and that ye may become my disciples.”

**So shall ye be my disciples.**—*Better, and may become my disciples.* The pronoun is strongly emphatic. The living union with Christ, which made all their prayers, prayers in His name, and prayers which He would answer, and made them abound with fruit to the glory of God, was the characteristic which marked them as His true disciples.

**(9) As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you.**—*Better, As the Father hath loved Me, I have also loved you.* He had passed from the thought of their discipleship to the foundation of their union with Him and with God. It was in the eternal love of the Father, ever going forth to the Son, and from the Son ever going forth to all who would receive it. The Father’s love and presence was

continue ye in my love.  
<sup>(10)</sup> If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's com-

mandments, and abide in his love. <sup>(11)</sup> These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy

ever with the Son, because the Son ever did those things which were pleasing to Him. (Comp. Note on chap. viii. 31.) The love of the Son is ever present wherever willing heart of obedient disciple is open to its power.

**C**ontinue ye in my love.—Better, *abide ye in My love*. The word “continue” misses the connection with the context. By “My love” is meant, not “love to Me in your hearts,” but “My love towards you.” The one produces the other. “We love Him because He hath first loved us;” but that which is prominent in the thought here is His love to the disciples, which He has just compared to the Father’s love to Himself.

<sup>(10)</sup> **I**f ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love.—Comp. chap. xiv. 21, 24. The keeping of His commandments is the outward proof of love towards Him; so that the love of the human heart towards Christ, which itself flows from Christ’s love to us (see Note on previous verse), becomes the condition of abiding in that love. While we cherish love for Him, our hearts are abiding in that state which can receive His love for us.

**E**nough as I have kept my Father’s commandments . . .—Comp. Note on verse 9 and reference there. This is again an appeal to His perfect sinlessness, and willing subordination as Son

to the Father. We should notice also that the keeping of the commandments is not an arbitrary condition imposed upon human love, but a necessary result of love itself, and therefore as true in the relation of the Son to the Father as it is in our relation to Him. Because the Son loved the Father, therefore He kept His commandments, and in this love He abode in the Father’s love. Because we love God we necessarily keep His commandments, and in this love is the receptive power which constitutes abiding in the divine love.

<sup>(11)</sup> **T**hese things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you.—The better reading is, . . . *that My joy may be in you*. The joy thought of is that which Christ Himself possessed in the consciousness of His love towards the Father, and of the Father’s love towards Him. The brightness of that joy lit up the darkest hours of His own human life, and He wills that it should light up theirs. In the consciousness of their love to God, and of God’s love to them, there would be in them, as part of their true life, joy which no sorrow could ever overcome. They were as men with troubled hearts. He has told them of the true source of peace. His own peace He has given to them. He tells them now of the source of joy, and has spoken the word that they may possess the

might be full. <sup>(12)</sup> This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.<sup>a</sup> <sup>(13)</sup> Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. <sup>(14)</sup> Ye

<sup>a</sup> ch. 13,  
34;  
1 Tues.  
4. 9;  
1 John  
3. 11.

are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. <sup>(15)</sup> Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all

very joy which was the light of His own heart.

**And that your joy might be full.**—Comp. the words of the Intercessory Prayer in chap. xvii. 13, and the same phrase in chap. iii. 29; xvi. 24; 1 John i. 4; 2 John, verse 12. The state of which He has spoken to them—the loving and being loved of God—is the ideal perfection of human life. It supplies satisfaction for all the deepest desires of our being. The capacities of the whole man are fulfilled in it, and the result is fulness of joy. They have learnt little of the true spirit of Christianity whose religion does not impart to them a joy which sheds its light over the whole of their lives.

**(12) This is my commandment.**—Comp. Note on chap. xiii. 34. In verse 10 keeping of His commandments was laid down as the means of abiding in His love. He now reminds them that that which was specially the commandment to them was love to one another. Love to God is proved by love to mankind. The two great commandments of the law are really one. “If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”

**(13) Greater love hath no man than this.**—Better, . . .

*hath no one than this.* (Comp. Note on chap. x. 18, 29.) Nothing greater is conceivable in the thought of love. He has spoken of His own love for them as the measure of their love for each other. The thought of this verse dwells upon what His love really was and what theirs should also be. (Comp. especially 1 John iii. 16.)

**That a man lay down his life for his friends.**—Better, *that any one . . .* For the phrase “lay down his life,” comp. chap. x. 11. The term “friends” is here used because those whom He is addressing were His friends. There is no opposition between this passage and Rom. v. 6 *et seq.* The point dwelt upon is the greatness of the love, and the highest reach of love is the self-sacrifice which spares not life itself.

**(14) Ye are my friends . . .**—Stress is to be laid upon the pronoun, “Ye are My friends . . .” “Ye are those of whom I have just spoken, and for whom I am about to give the greatest proof of love.”

**If ye do whatsoever I command you.**—Better, *the things which I am commanding you.* (Comp. chap. xiv. 21, 23.)

**(15) Henceforth I call you not servants.**—Better, *I call you no longer, or, I do not still call you, servants.* (Comp. chap. xiv. 30.)

things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. <sup>(16)</sup> Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and or-

<sup>a</sup> Matt.  
28.19.

dained you," that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father

For the word "servant," as applied to them, comp. chaps. xii. 26; xiii. 13. It is used again in this discourse (verse 20), but with reference to an earlier saying. In chap. xx. 17, he calls them brethren. The word here rendered "servant" means literally "bond - servant," "slave." He will not apply this to them, but the foremost Apostles felt that His service was perfect freedom, and it became the common title which they applied to themselves. (Comp., e.g., Rom. i. 1; Jas. i. 1; 2 Pet. i. 1; Rev. i. 1.)

**For the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth.**—The part of the slave is mechanical obedience, without any principle of love between his master and himself. He knows nothing of the purpose or aim of his master, and although he sees the deeds which are done, he knows not what his master doeth. There is no occasion to read the word "doeth" as though it were "will do" (future), which has not unfrequently been accepted as the explanation.

**For all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you**—i.e., He had treated them as friends and sharers in their common work. He has revealed to them the character and attributes of the Father, and kept back from them no truth of which they could understand the meaning. There is no contradiction with chap. xvi. 12. The reason He had not told them more was not on

His part, but on theirs. They could not then receive more, but in the future He would by the Holy Spirit declare to them all truth.

**(16) Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.**—Comp. Luke vi. 12 *et seq.*, and in this Gospel, chaps. vi. 70, and xiii. 18. The thought of His love for them, which had exalted them from the position of slaves to friends, from fishermen to Apostles, is made to remind them again (verse 17) of the duty of love to each other. In verse 20 He reminds them of the words which accompanied His own act of humility in washing their feet (chap. xiii. 15, 16). The chiefest Apostle owed all to His gift and election, and should be ready to sacrifice all for his brethren, as He Himself was.

**And ordained you.**—The word "ordained" has acquired a special sense in modern English which is here misleading, and it will be better, therefore, to read *appointed*.

**That ye should go and bring forth fruit.**—Comp. Matt. xiii. 44; xviii. 15; xix. 21, for the idea of going away and doing something. It implies here the activity of the Apostles as distinct from that of Christ. Each one as a branch ever joined to Christ was to grow away from Him in the development of his own work, and was to bring forth his own fruit. The margin compares Matt. xxviii. 19, probably with the thought of

in my name, he may give it you. <sup>(17)</sup> These things I command you, that ye love one another. <sup>(18)</sup> If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you. <sup>(19)</sup> If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but

<sup>a</sup> Matt.  
10. 24;  
ch. 13.  
16.

because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. <sup>(20)</sup> Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord.<sup>a</sup> If they have persecuted me, they will

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their fulfilling the Apostle's missionary work. This view has been commonly adopted, but it gives to the word "go" a fulness of meaning which is scarcely warranted.

**And that your fruit should remain.**—Comp. Note on chap. iv. 36; and see 2 John verse 8, and Rev. xiv. 13.

**That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father.**—Comp. Notes on verses 7 and 8.

<sup>(17)</sup> **These things I command you**—*i.e.*, the things of which He has spoken from verse 1 onwards, and especially from verses 12—16. After speaking them He comes back to the purpose from which this section started, "that ye love one another."

We must beware of the not unfrequent mistake of interpreting "these things" of the words which follow, as if it were, "I command you this, *viz.*, to love one another." The thought is, "I am giving you these precepts that you may love one another."

<sup>(18)</sup> **If the world hate you.**—He has spoken of their close union with Himself, and of their love to each other. He proceeds in the remainder of the chapter to speak of their relation to the world. There is a striking contrast between the "love" in the last verse,

and the "hatred" in this. There was the more need for them to be closely bound to each other, and to their Lord, on account of the hatred which awaited them in the world.

**Ye know that it hated me before it hated you.**—It is better to take the first word as an imperative, "Know that it hated . . ." The very hatred, then, is a bond of union with their Master, and this thought should supply strength to meet it, and joy even when suffering from it (verse 11). (Comp. 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13.)

<sup>(19)</sup> **If ye were of the world, the world would love his own.**—The force of the expression indicates the utter selfishness of the world's love. It would love not them, but that in them which was its own. (Comp. Note on chap. vii. 7.)

**I have chosen you out of the world.**—Comp. verse 16, and Note on chap. vii. 7. There He had told them that the world could not hate them. The very fact of its hatred would prove a moral change in them, by which they had ceased to belong to the world, and had become the children of God. Both thoughts are repeated in 1 John iii. 13, and iv. 5.

<sup>(20)</sup> **Remember the word**

also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep your's also. (21) But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because

<sup>1</sup> Or, excuse.

they know not him that sent me. (22) If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke<sup>1</sup> for their sin. (23) He

**that I said unto you.**—Comp. chap. xiii. 16, where the saying is used in a different sense; and Matt. x. 24, where it is used in the same connection in which we find it here.

**If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying . . .**—The meaning is exactly that which is expressed in the rendering of the English version. The two things are necessarily united, as Christ and His disciples are united. His word is their word. The relation of the world to the one, would be that which it had been to the other.

(21) **But all these things will they do unto you.**—These words are themselves an interpretation of the previous verse. They suppose the persecution and hatred to take place, and find the true consolation in the fact that this would be done to them as representing their Lord. The Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles are a commentary on this text. (Comp., among numerous passages, Acts iv. 17; ix. 14; Gal. iii. 17.)

**Because they know not him that sent me.**—The hatred is here traced to its true cause, which is ignorance of God. The Apostles were those sent by Christ. He Himself was the Apostle of the Father. They would hate His messenger, and hate Him, the messenger of God, because they knew not God

(22) **If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin.**—In this and the following verses (22—25) our Lord shows the sinfulness of the world's hatred, because it was in the face of His revelation to them by both word (verse 22) and work (verse 24). Apart from this revelation, their sin would have belonged to the times of ignorance, which God overlooked (Acts xvii. 30, 31). It would have been the negative evil of men who know not. It was now the positive evil of men who, knowing the truth, wilfully reject it.

**But now they have no cloke for their sin.**—Better, as in the margin, *they have no excuse for their sin.* The Greek phrase occurs only here in the New Testament. The word “cloke” as used with sin is familiar to us from the exhortation in the Book of Common Prayer. The idea is rather to cover up, to hide as with a garment, so that they may not be seen; whereas here the idea is of excuse for manifest sin.

(23) **He that hateth me hateth my Father also.**—Comp. Note on chap. v. 23, and verse 18 in this context. Again the darkness of the world's hatred is drawn in the successive degrees of sin. Hatred against the disciples is hatred against the Master whom they represent. Hatred against the Son is hatred against the Father whom He represents. Hatred of the Father! There can be no greater

that hateth me hateth my Father also. <sup>(24)</sup> If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. <sup>(25)</sup> But

a Ps. 35.  
19.  
b Luke  
24. 49.  
ch. 14.  
26.

*this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.*<sup>a</sup> <sup>(26)</sup> But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the

darkness. The sinfulness of sin has in this thought reached its limit. God is love. The heart that can hate love has hardened itself, and cannot be loved.

<sup>(24)</sup> **If I had not done among them the works.**—Comp. Note on verse 22, and for the evidence of our Lord's works, see chaps. v. 36; ix. 3, 4, 24; x. 21, 37; xiv. 10. They met the evidence of works by the assertion that He was a sinner, and possessed a devil. Their hatred led them to ascribe the highest good to the power of evil. To such hearts there are no channels by which goodness can approach. (Comp. especially Matt. xii. 31, 32.)

<sup>(25)</sup> **But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled . . .**—The words in italics are not found in the original, but they rightly complete the sense. For the phrase, "might be fulfilled," comp. Notes on chaps. xii. 38 and xiii. 18.

**That is written in their law.**—Comp. Note on chap. x. 34.

**They hated me without a cause.**—The passage immediately referred to is probably that of the Messianic Psalm lxix. 4. The words are found also in Ps. xxxv. 19 (see marg. ref.), and less distinctly in Pss. cix. 3 and cxix. 161. (Comp. especially Note on the quotation

from this same Psalm in chap. ii. 17).

The words, "without a cause," rightly express the meaning of the Hebrew word in the Psalm. The Greek follows the LXX., which expresses the thought "to no purpose" or "in vain." This is, however, not the idea of the context here. They had no reason for their sin, and therefore they hated Him without a cause. True were these words of many an earlier sufferer; but they were in their fulness true, they were "fulfilled," only in the one sinless Sufferer.

<sup>(26)</sup> **But when the Comforter is come.**—Better, *But when the Advocate is come.* (Comp. *Excursus H.*, p. 446.)

**Whom I will send unto you from the Father.**—Comp. chap. xiv. 16, and Note on verse 26. The pronoun is here emphatic. "Whom I will send . . ." The mission by the Father in answer to the Son's prayer, and the mission by the Father in the Son's name, and the mission by the Son Himself, are thought of as one and the same thing.

**Even the Spirit of Truth.**—Comp. Note on chap. xiv. 17.

**Which proceedeth from the Father.**—The force of these words is to give weight to the witness which the Spirit shall bear of the

Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me :  
(27) and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have

A.D. 33.

been with me from the beginning.

## CHAPTER XVI. —

(1) These things have I

Son. He is the Advocate whom the Son will send from the Father, but He is also and emphatically the Spirit of Truth proceeding from the Father, and His witness therefore will be that of the Father Himself. These two clauses ("whom I will send unto you from the Father," "which proceedeth from the Father") are to be regarded as parallels ; and both of them probably refer to the *office* of the Holy Spirit. The Vulgate renders the verb in the latter clause by the word "procedit," and the older expositors generally understand it of the *person* of the Holy Ghost. The Eastern Church, from the days of Theodore of Mopsuestia downwards, have claimed this text as proving the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father only, and have quoted it as decisive against the addition of the "filioque clause" in the Nicene creed. The Western Church, comparing it with chap. xvi. 15, and such texts as Rom. viii. 9; Gal. iv. 6; Phil. i. 9; 1 Pet. i. 11, have held that it includes the procession from the Son. If it refers to the person of the Holy Spirit, it must be granted that the *ipsissima verba* of our Lord are in favour of the interpretation of the Greek Church; but if it refers, as with much greater probability it does, to the office of the Holy Ghost, then *these words* have no bearing upon the doctrinal question at issue. The student should read on this subject, Pearson *On the*

*Creed*, Art. viii., more particularly his invaluable collection of notes.

**He shall testify of me.—**  
Better, *shall bear witness of Me.* (Comp. Note on chap. i. 7, and see 1 John v. 6.)

(27) **And ye also shall bear witness.**—The tense is present, *and ye also bear witness*; or, *and ye also are witnesses.* (Comp. Luke xxiv. 48, 49.) The Apostles themselves distinguished between their own witness of things which had come within their own experience, and the witness borne by the power of the Holy Spirit, of which the Day of Pentecost was the first great instance. (Comp. Acts v. 32.)

**Because ye have been with me from the beginning.**—See Note on chap. i. 7; and comp. Acts i. 21, 22. The "beginning" of course means the beginning of the Messianic teaching and works of which they were to be witnesses.

## XVI.

[2] THE LAST WORDS OF DEEPEST MEANING TO THE FAITHFUL FEW (*continued*).

(f) *Their relation to the world and the promise of the Paraclete explained more fully* (chap. xvi. 1—33).

(a) *Though the world will hate them, it is still expedient that He should depart from them* (verses 1—7).

spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

(2) They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that who-

soever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. (3) And these things will they do unto you, because they have not

- (β) The coming of the Paraclete and His office (verses 8—15).
- (γ) His own departure and return. Their sorrow the birth-pangs of joy (verses 16—24).
- (δ) He promises a full revelation of the Father (verses 25—28).
- (ε) Their faith is now weak, though they think it strong (verses 29—32); their future shall be one of tribulation, but He has overcome the world (verse 33).]

(1) These things have I spoken unto you.—Comp. Note on chap. xv. 17. Here, too, the reference is to the things which He had just said (verses 17—27). He had foretold them of the hatred of the world and also of the witness of the Spirit.

**That ye should not be offended.**—Comp. Matt. xi. 6; xiii. 21; xxiv. 10 *et al.* In St. John the word occurs only here and in chap. vi. 61.

(2) They shall put you out of the synagogues.—Comp. Notes on chaps. ix. 22; xii. 42.

**Will think that he doeth God service.**—Better, *will think that he offereth to God a sacrificial service.* The word rendered “doeth” in the Authorised version is the technical word for offering sacrifice. (Comp., e.g., Matt. v. 23 and viii. 4.)

The word rendered “service” means the service of worship. This will be seen by a comparison of the other instances where it occurs in the New Testament—they are Rom. ix. 4, and xii. 1, and Heb. ix. 1, 6. A Rabbinic comment on Num. xxv. 13, is, “Whosoever sheddeth the blood of the wicked is as he who offereth sacrifice.” The martyrdom of Stephen, or St. Paul’s account of himself as a persecutor (Acts xxvi. 9; Gal. i. 13, 14), shows how these words were fulfilled in the first years of the Church’s history, and such accounts are not absent from that history’s latest page.

(3) **Because they have not known the Father, nor me.**—Comp. Note on chap. xv. 21. He repeats that ignorance of God is the cause of the world’s hatred and persecution, and adds here that it is ignorance of God revealed in Himself. There is a special force in the mention of this ignorance in connection with the previous verse. Men think that in exclusion, and anathemas, and persecutions, and deaths of men made like themselves in the image of God, they are offering to God an acceptable sacrifice. They can know nothing of the true nature of the loving Father who pitith every child, and willeth not the death of a sinner, and gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. They know nothing of the long-suffering and compassion of the Son of Man,

known the Father, nor me.  
<sup>(4)</sup> But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you

at the beginning, because I was with you. <sup>(5)</sup> But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? <sup>(6)</sup> But because I have said these

who pleaded even for His murderers, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

**(4) But these things have I told you . . .**—He recurs to the thought of verse 1. (Comp. also chaps. xiii. 19 and xiv. 29.) He strengthens them by forewarning them. When the persecution comes they will remember His word, and find in it support for their faith, and evidence of His presence with them.

**These things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.**—While with them, He would spare them, and it was against Himself that the hatred of His foes was directed. When He shall have left them they will represent Him, and must stand in the foreground of the battle.

These words seem to be opposed to Matt. x. and parallel passages, where our Lord did tell the Apostles at the time of their call of the persecutions which awaited them. (See especially verses 17, 21, 28.) The passages are not, however, really inconsistent, for "these things" in this verse (comp. verses 3 and 1, and chap. xv. 21) refers to the full account He has given them of the world's hatred and the principles lying at the foot of it, and the manner in which it was to be met by the Spirit's witness and

their witness of Him. These things which the infant Church would have to meet, and meet without His bodily presence, He told them not at the beginning.

**(5) But now I go my way to him that sent me.**—(Comp. chaps. xiii. 1 and xiv. 12.) The work of His apostleship on earth was drawing to its close, and He was about to return to the Father from whom He had received it. This was to Him matter of joy, and if they had really loved Him would have been so to them. They would have thought of the future before him, as He was then thinking, in the fulness of His love, of the future before them.

**And none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?**—Peter had asked this very question (chap. xiii. 36), and Thomas had implied it (chap. xiv. 5), but what the words here mean is, "None of you are out of love for me asking about the place whither I am going. Your thoughts are not with Me. It is to you as nothing that I am returning to Him that sent Me."

**(6) Sorrow hath filled your heart.**—The thought of their own separation from Him, and of the dark future which lay before them, so filled their hearts that it left room for no thoughts of Him, and the brightness of the glory to which He was returning.

things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.  
<sup>(7)</sup> Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away:

for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.  
<sup>(8)</sup> And when he is come,

**(7) Nevertheless I tell you the truth.**—The words He is about to utter are words of strange sound for the ears of disciples, and He prefaces them by an appeal to His own knowledge and candour in dealing with them, as in chap. xiv. 2. The pronoun bears the weight of the emphasis. “I, who know all.”

**It is expedient for you that I go away.**—“There is no cause,” He would say, “for the deep sorrow which has filled your hearts. It is for your advantage that *I*, as distinct from the Paraclete, who is to come, should go away” (chap. xiv. 16). Yes; for those who had left all to follow Him; for those who had none to go to but Himself (chap. vi. 68); for those whose hopes were all centred in Him, it was—hard and incomprehensible as the saying must have seemed—an advantage that he should go away.

**For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.**—Better, . . . *the Advocate will not come unto you.* (Comp. *Ex cursus H*, p. 446.) For the connection between the departure of Christ and the coming of the Advocate, see Note on chap. vii. 39, and comp. Acts ii. 33. We may not fathom the deep counsels of God in which the reason of these words is to be found; but the order fixed in these counsels was that the Son of Man should complete His work on earth, and offer the sacrifice of Himself for sin, and rise from the dead, and

ascend to the Father’s throne, before the Advocate should come. The Son of Man was to be glorified before the Spirit was to be given. Humanity was to ascend to heaven, before the Spirit could be sent to humanity on earth. The revelation of saving truth was to be complete, before inspiration was to breathe it as the breath of life into man’s soul. The conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment could only follow the finished work of Christ.

**But if I depart, I will send him unto you.**—Our translators have sought to show the distinction between the words used in the earlier clauses, “I go away,” and that used here, “I depart”; but probably few English readers will have observed it. The former word means, “I go away from you,” the latter, “I go away to the Father.” For the thought of this clause, comp. Notes on chaps. xiv. 16 and xv. 25.

**(8) And when he is come, he will reprove the world.**—Better, as in margin, *convince the world.* (Comp. chaps. iii. 20 and viii. 46). The only other passages where it occurs in the Gospels are in Matt. xviii. 15, and Luke iii. 19. It is not in the better reading of John viii. 9; but it occurs not unfrequently in the Epistles. (See especially 1 Cor. xiv. 24.) This conviction of the world is by witness concerning Christ (chap. xv. 26). It is the revelation to the

he will reprove<sup>1</sup> the world  
of sin, and of righteousness,  
and of judgment:

<sup>1</sup> Or, con-vince.

(<sup>2</sup>) of sin, because they believe not on me; (<sup>10</sup>) of righteousness, because 1

hearts of men, of the character and work of Christ, and, therefore a refutation of the evil in their hearts. The result of this conviction is two-fold, according as men embrace it, accept its chastening discipline, and are saved by it; or reject it, and in the rejection harden their hearts, and are thus condemned by it. (Comp. 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.) The effect of St. Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost is the first great historical comment on this verse; but the comment is continued in the whole history of the Church's work. The remainder of the verse enumerates the three steps in this conviction, which are more fully defined in the three following verses.

(<sup>3</sup>) Of sin, because they believe not on me.—This should not be interpreted, as it very frequently is, of the sin of unbelief, but of sin generally; unbelief in Christ is stated as the cause of sin. Sin is missing the aim of life, the disordered action of powers that have lost their controlling principle. Christ is the revelation to the world of the Father's love. In union with God through Him the soul finds the centre of its being, and the true purpose of its life. By the witness of Christ the Holy Spirit convinces men that He is the centre of the moral harmony of the Universe, and that through Him their spirits have access to God. This conviction reveals to them their sin, because they believe not on Him. Its effect is salutary or condemnatory, according as we

are convinced and converted by it, or refuse its influence and remain convicted.

(<sup>4</sup>) Of righteousness, because I go to my Father.—In the conviction of sin, the world is convinced of its own sin by the Spirit's representation of Christ to it. That representation of Christ brings also the conviction of righteousness, but this is the righteousness of Christ, not that of the world. The conviction of Christ's righteousness necessarily precedes that of the heart's own sin. The light makes the darkness visible, and the revelation of the darkness shows the clearness of the light. The special reason of the conviction of righteousness is the resurrection and ascension of our Lord. Men had called him a sinner (chap. ix. 24), and His crucifixion was the world's assertion that He was a malefactor (chap. xviii. 30); but even when He was hanging upon the cross there came to the centurion's mind the conviction, "Truly this Man was innocent" (see Luke xxiii. 47); and moreover His return to the Father was Heaven's witness to His righteousness. For the way in which this conviction was brought home to the hearts of the Apostles, and through them to the hearts of mankind, comp. especially Acts ii. 27, 31, 36, 37. See also Acts iii. 14; vii. 52; 1 Pet. iii. 18; 1 John ii. 1, 29; iii. 7.

And ye see me no more.—The word means, "look upon," "behold." The going to the

go to my Father, and ye  
see me no more; <sup>(11)</sup> of  
judgment, because the

prince of this world is  
judged.  
<sup>(12)</sup> I have yet many

Father would cause that they should gaze upon His bodily presence no more; but the Spirit's witness of Him, which would convince the world of sin and righteousness, would be to them a truer presence of their Lord than any which physical eye could see. The eye of the spirit sees the reality; the eye of the body only looks upon the appearance.

<sup>(11)</sup> Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.—Comp. Notes on chaps. iii. 17, 18, and xii. 30, 31. The tense here is perfect, marking the completion of the condemnation. “The prince of this world hath been and remaineth judged.” The conviction is regarded from the point of view of the coming of the Advocate, when Christ’s work shall have been completed. That work is the redemption of the world, and is, therefore, the condemnation of the prince of this world. The conviction of this judgment follows upon that of sin and upon that of righteousness. The two kingdoms stand out in clear distinction. The power of the prince of this world is overcome by the opening of the kingdom of heaven to all believers. The King of Righteousness is in victory seated upon His throne, and claims mankind, whose nature He has assumed and whom He has redeemed, to be free from sin, and servants of righteousness.

It is not within the scope of these Notes to discuss the theories of interpretation, and the many difficulties which attend every in-

terpretation, of verses 7—11. All that can be attempted is to place the reader in possession of what seems to be the simplest meaning of the words. A more full treatment is less necessary as a complete discussion of the whole subject is easily accessible in the Sermons of the late Archdeacon of Lewes, preached before the University of Cambridge, in 1840. The Notes attached to the Sermons are an exhaustive summary of the views held in ancient and modern times by men most capable of judging. (See J. C. Hare, *Mission of the Comforter*, Ed. 3, 1876.)

<sup>(12)</sup> I have yet many things to say unto you.—The “many things” are defined by the next verse to be things with regard to which the Spirit of Truth shall be their guide—i.e., they are parts of the revelation which the minds of the disciples are not yet fitted to receive.

**Ye cannot bear them now.**  
Comp. chap. xv. 15. The statements are not opposed to each other. On His side there is the readiness to impart to them as friends all things that He had heard from the Father. But revelation can only be made to the mind which can accept it; and for those who have only in part understood what He has told them there are many things which cannot now be borne.

Of what the “many things” were, we have only this general knowledge. They would include, doubtless, the doctrinal system of

things to say unto you,  
but ye cannot bear them  
now. <sup>(18)</sup> Howbeit when

he, the Spirit of truth, is  
come, he will guide you  
into all truth: for he shall

the early Church, and they would not exclude all the lessons which the Spirit of God has taught the Church in every age.

The fact that there were truths which Christ Himself could not teach is a lesson which men who profess to teach in Christ's name have too seldom learnt. St. Paul found in it a rule for his own practice. He, too, fed men with milk because they could not bear meat. (Comp. 1 Cor. iii. 3.) It is true, indeed, that no one can teach who does not possess a higher knowledge than that of his pupil; but it is no less true that no one can really teach who does not take the lower ground of his pupil's knowledge, and from that lead him to his own. Truths which the cultured mind accepts as obvious would appear no less so to the peasant if he were carefully taught them. Too often the weaker brother finds a stumbling-block in the very steps which should lead him to a higher truth, because he approaches them blindly and without a guide. For the breach which exists between the higher Christian thought of our day and the faith of the masses of the people, Christian teachers are in no small degree responsible, and the only means by which the chasm may be bridged is to teach Christ's truths as He Himself taught them.

<sup>(18)</sup> Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come.—Comp. Note on chap. xiv. 17.

He will guide you into all truth.—Better, . . . into all the

truth. The words do not mean that the Holy Spirit will fully guide them into truth, but that He will be their guide into the fulness of truth. The word rendered "guide," occurs again in Matt. xv. 14; Luke vi. 39; Rev. vii. 17; and metaphorically, as here, in Acts viii. 31. A comparison of these passages will show that its meaning is "to point out the way," "to lead one on his way." The fulness of truth is for the disciples an unknown territory. They are spiritually as blind men, feeling after the truth, but not able to see it. The Spirit of Truth will take them by the hand, and, step by step, as they have strength to follow, will guide them into the territory, and unfold to them the treasures it contains. The promise has a special meaning for the disciples to whom it was spoken; but it holds good for every disciple who seeks to know the truth. We may pray—without doubt that the prayer is in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and without doubt that it will be answered—

" Come, Holy Ghost! our souls inspire,  
And lighten with celestial fire.

Enable, with perpetual light,  
The dulness of our blinded sight."

The scribes, "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, and bringing forth out of their treasure things new and old" (Matt. xiii. 52), may know that they can seek, and not seek in vain, a higher than human guidance, and may hope "by the same Spirit to have a right

not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. <sup>(14)</sup> He shall glorify

me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. <sup>(15)</sup> All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I,

judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort."

For he shall not speak of himself.—Comp. Notes on chaps. v. 19 and vii. 17, 18. The Holy Spirit's power to guide into the truth depends upon the fact that He, like the Son Himself, will represent to the world the eternal truth of God. He, too, is subordinated to the Father, and His work is to seek the glory of Him that sent Him. (Comp., on the other hand, chap. viii. 44, where the essence of the lie is that the devil speaketh of his own.)

And he will shew you things to come.—Better, *and He will announce to you the things to come.* (Comp. Rev. i. 1; xxii. 6, 20.) We must again be on our guard against drawing limits which Christ has not drawn. These words, too, have their fulfilment in the Spirit's illumination in all time; but we may still find their first and special meaning in the Revelation to the Apostolic Church, of which St. John's Apocalypse is the most prominent example.

<sup>(14)</sup> He shall glorify me.—The pronoun is here full of emphasis. The thought is that the future guidance of the Spirit promised in verse 13, will be the revelation of the many things of Christ Himself which they cannot bear now (verse 12).

For he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto

you.—Better, as in verse 13, . . . *announce it unto you.* This is the test of the Spirit, "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God." (Comp. 1 John iv. 1, 2.) The revelation of Christ is not an imperfect revelation which the Holy Spirit is to supplement. It is a full revelation imperfectly received, and His office is to illumine the heart, and bring home to it the things of Christ.

<sup>(15)</sup> All things that the Father hath are mine.—He has told them that the Spirit's work is to glorify Him, to receive of His, and announce to the world. The ground of this saying is in the fact that the Son is the Revealer of the Father, and that the fulness of the truth (verse 13) is given unto Him. The words appear from the context not to express the spiritual relation of the Son to the Father, but the fulness of the communication to Him in His human nature of the divine truth which He should reveal to man. (See Notes on chaps. i. 18; viii. 42; x. 36; xvii. 10; and comp. Matt. xi. 27; Col. i. 19; ii. 2, 3.)

He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.—*Better, He taketh of Mine, and shall declare it unto you.* The present expresses the unchanging relation of the Spirit to the Son. It should be noted that in these verses (14 and 15) there is an implication of

that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. <sup>(16)</sup> A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. <sup>(17)</sup> Then said some of his disciples among themselves,

What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? <sup>(18)</sup> They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot

the following doctrinal truths. They are implied, let us remember, in the words of our Lord Himself, and that they are implied and not stated increases the force of their meaning:—(1) The divinity of the Son: "He shall glorify Me;" "All things that the Father hath are Mine." (2) The personality of the Holy Ghost: "He shall receive of Mine." The Greek word, *ēkeīvōs*, expresses this in the most emphatic way. The word is used of the Holy Spirit in verses 8 and 13, and in chaps. xiv. 26 and xv. 26. (3) The Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity: "the Father;" "I;" "He."

<sup>(16)</sup> **A little while, and ye shall not see me.**—The better reading is, *A little while, and ye no longer behold Me*. For the sense, comp. Notes on chap. xiv. 18, 19. The time here referred to is that between the moment of His speaking to them and His death.

**And again, a little while, and ye shall see me.**—The time here referred to is the interval between His death and the Day of Pentecost. That the vision is to be understood of our Lord's presence in the person of the Paraclete (chap. xiv. 18, 19), is confirmed by verse 23. Note that in this clause the verb ("see") is different from

that in the preceding clause ("behold"). The latter refers rather to the physical, and the former to the spiritual, vision. (Comp. chap. xx. 6—8.)

**Because I go to the Father.**—The majority of the better MSS. omit these words at this place. They have probably been inserted here from the end of the next verse. (Comp. Note there.)

<sup>(17, 18)</sup> **Then said some of his disciples among themselves.**—Better, *Therefore said . . .* The question arises out of what He has said. They draw aside and discuss the matter privately. It is beyond their comprehension, and seems to be contradictory.

**A little while, and ye shall not see me.**—Better, *A little while and ye behold Me not*, as in verse 16.

**Because I go to the Father.**—So far they have quoted word for word what He had said in the previous verse. They now connect it with what He had said in verses 7 and 10, and this forms the ground of their surprise. There He had spoken of their beholding Him no more because He goeth to the Father. Here He speaks of a little while, after which they shall not behold Him, and again a little while, after which they shall see

tell what he saith. <sup>(19)</sup> Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me : and again, a little while, and ye shall see me ?  
<sup>(20)</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall

weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice : and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. <sup>(21)</sup> A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come : but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy

Him. They cannot reconcile these things. They cannot tell what He saith.

<sup>(19)</sup> Now Jesus knew they were desirous to ask him.—The purpose of His enigmatic saying (verse 29) has been accomplished. Their attention has been excited, and they have taken the first step towards knowledge. They inquire among themselves, and this spirit of inquiry which He reads in their hearts (comp. chaps. ii. 25, vi. 6) He proceeds to answer. The first part of His answer is concerned with their difficulty about the “little while.” In verse 28 He answers their thought about His going to the Father.

<sup>(20)</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you.—Comp. Note on chap. i. 51.

That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice.—Comp. chap. xx. 11 and Luke xxxiii. 27. In the original the contrast between the sorrow of the disciples and the joy of the world is rendered the more striking by the order of the words, “Weep and lament shall *ye*, but the world shall rejoice.” The tears and the scoffs at the cross were the accomplishment of this prophecy.

**And ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.**—The expression is a full one. It is not simply that they shall pass from sorrow to joy, but that the sorrow itself shall become joy. They will rejoice in the presence of the Lord, when after a little while they will see Him and will feel that the separation necessarily went before the union, and that the sorrow was itself a matter of joy because it was the necessary cause of the joy (verse 7, and chap. xx. 20).

**A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow.**—The Greek is more exactly, *the woman . . . hath pangs*—that is, “the woman in the well-known illustration.” (See Note on chap. xv. 15.) This figure was of frequent use in the prophets. (Comp. Isa. xxi. 3 ; xxvi. 17, 18, and especially lxvi. 7, 8 ; Jer. iv. 31 ; xxii. 23 ; xxx. 6 ; Hos. xiii. 13, 14 ; Mic. iv. 9, 10.)

**That a man is born into the world.**—The word is the wider word for “human being.” (Comp. Note on chap. i. 51.) The thought is of the joy of maternity swallowing up the pangs of childbirth. These cease to exist, but

that a man is born into the world. <sup>(22)</sup> And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man

taketh from you. <sup>(23)</sup> And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will

that continues. She forgets the one in the fulness of the other.

For the phrase "into the world" comp. chaps. i. 9 and xviii. 37.

<sup>(22)</sup> **And ye now therefore have sorrow.**—The same word is used. The hour of their travail-pangs was at hand; but it would pass away, and the fulness of joy would come in the constant presence of their Lord. Their sorrow would be but temporary; their joy would be abiding. The point of comparison between their state, and the familiar illustration of a woman in travail, is the passage from extreme suffering to extreme joy. We are not justified in taking the illustration as a parable, and interpreting it of the death of Christ as the birth-pang of a perfect humanity. This is the general interpretation of the more mystical expositors, and has been unfolded with great truth and beauty; but it is not an exposition of the present text.

**But I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice.**—In verse 19 He had said "Ye shall see." This is the obverse of the same truth. He will again be with them, and see them as they will see Him. The words include too the thought of His deep sympathy with them. He sees them now in the depth of their sorrow, and feels with them in that. He will see them again in the time of

their joy, and will rejoice with them in that.

**And your joy no man taketh from you.**—The reading is doubtful. Some of the better MSS. have the future ". . . shall take from you." "No man," is better rendered indefinitely, *no one*, as, e.g., in chap. x. 18 and 29. (Comp. Matt. xxviii. 20, and Rom. viii. 38, 39.)

<sup>(23)</sup> **And in that day ye shall ask me nothing.**—Comp. Acts i. 6. The time here referred to is, as we have seen (verse 16), the time of the gift of the Paraclete, who shall fully illumine them, so that they shall not need to ask the meaning of new thoughts and words as they have done hitherto. (Comp., e.g., the certain knowledge of Peter's speech in Acts ii. with the misunderstandings of these last days of the Lord's ministry.)

**Verily, verily, I say unto you.**—Comp. chap. i. 51. As we have so often found, these words precede a truth of weighty import.

**Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.**—The more probable reading is, *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, He will give it you in My name*. The thought is that the prayer is offered in Christ's name (comp. Note on chap. xiv. 13, and in this context verse 24), and that the answer to every such prayer is in virtue of His name. The fact that we pray in His name

give it you.<sup>a</sup> <sup>(24)</sup> Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. <sup>(25)</sup> These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs:<sup>1</sup> but the

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 7.  
7.

<sup>2</sup> Or,  
para-  
bles.

<sup>1</sup> Or,  
para-  
bles.

time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs,<sup>2</sup> but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. <sup>(26)</sup> At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I

makes it certain that the prayer will be answered. The fact that the prayer is answered is proof that it was in Christ's name.

<sup>(24)</sup> Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name.—Comp. Note on chap. xiv. 13. They had not up to this time received the Holy Spirit. When He came, He was as the presence of Christ dwelling in them. Under His influence their will became the will of Christ, and their thoughts the thoughts of Christ, and their prayers the prayers of Christ. They had not yet so learnt Him as to pray in His name. It would be otherwise in that day.

**Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.**—The future is thought of as already present, and they are directed to ask, as though they had already entered into the new region of spiritual life. The pangs of the present travailing are passing away (verse 22). The fulness of joy is already at hand. (Comp. Note on chap. xv. 11.)

<sup>(25)</sup> These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs.—Better, as in the margin, . . . in *parables*. So in the second clause of the verse and in verse 29. (Comp. Note on chap. x. 6.) “These things” refers specially to what He had just said from verse 16 onwards. There is a sense in which it is necessarily true of all Christ’s

teaching, and of all teaching in words. They are but parables until the truth which they contain has been thought out by the man that hears them. For the disciples much of Christ’s teaching remained in a parabolic form, until the Spirit brought all things which He had said to the mind, and quickened their minds so that they could grasp its meaning. (Comp., e.g., chap. ii. 20–22.)

**But the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs.**—For “proverbs,” read *parables*, as in last verse. For the time referred to, comp. verses 16 and 23. In that time He will be present with them in the Advocate, and will no longer need parables or words, but will, to the depth of their spirit, communicate to them in all fulness and plainness the eternal truth of the Father (verse 13 *et seq.*).

<sup>(26)</sup> **At that day ye shall ask in my name.**—Comp. Notes on verses 23 and 24. When guided by the Paraclete, the life will be subject to the will of Christ, and the prayer will be in His name.

**And I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you.**—These words have often been taken to mean, “That I will pray the Father for you, is a matter of course, of which I need not tell you;” but this sense is excluded by

will pray the Father for you: <sup>(27)</sup> for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out

from God. <sup>(28)</sup> I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

the following verse. The thought is rather, “I do not speak of praying for you, because in the presence of the Advocate you will yourselves be able to pray in My name to the Father.” His prayer is thought of as not necessary for them, and yet the form of the words implies that He will pray for them if it should be needed. While their hearts are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and they maintain communion with the Father, they will need no other Advocate, but “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John ii. 1). Comp. chaps. xiv. 16 and xvii. 9, which refer to the time which precedes the gift of the Holy Ghost.

**(27) For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me.**—Comp. Notes on chap. xiv. 21, 23. The introduction of the thought again here reminds us that, although in the fulness of the higher spiritual life there is communion between the Father and the human spirit, because the Father Himself ever loveth the heart which can receive His love, this power to receive the love of the Father is itself the result of loving the Son, who has revealed Him. Our Lord is leading them to the fuller truths of spiritual communion with God, and even tells them that this will be independent of mediation; but the very words which tell them that it will be independent of mediation, tell them that all

depends upon His own mediation and the manifestation of the love of God in His own person.

**And have believed that I came out from God.**—The reading is uncertain. Several of the better MSS. read, “. . . that I came forth from the Father.” (Comp. the first words of the next verse and chap. xiii. 3.) The perfect tenses represent their love and faith as completed, and continuing in the present. It is striking that the order of the words makes faith follow love. This order may be chosen to mark emphatically the connection between the Father’s love for the disciples and their love for the Son; but it also suggests that their convictions were the result of having their hearts opened by love so that they received the truth.

**(28) I came forth from the Father.**—Comp. Note on verse 19. He repeats with emphasis that which in the last verse He stated as believed by them—“It is true. I did come forth from the Father, and came into the world. But what follows from this? Heaven, and not earth, is My home. I leave the world again and return to the Father.” They had accepted the truth of the Incarnation, but in this there was already implied the truth of the Ascension, and in the truth of the Ascension there was implied the gift of the Paraclete, and the spiritual return and constant presence of Christ in the

(29) His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.<sup>1</sup> (30) Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask

<sup>1</sup> Or,  
parables.  
a Matt.  
26. 31.

thee : by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. (31) Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe ? (32) Behold, <sup>a</sup> the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered,

Church (verse 7 and chap. xiv. 14–18).

(29) Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.—Better, . . . parable as in verse 25. (Comp. Note there.) The emphasis is upon the word “now.” He had told them (verse 25) that the hour would come when He would speak to them no more in parables, but tell them plainly of the Father. His last words have explained what they before could not understand, and it seems to them that the illumination promised in the future has already come.

(30) Now are we sure that thou knowest all things.—Comp. verses 19 and 23. The “now” is emphatic, as in the previous verse. They see in His present knowledge of their thoughts, and in the light which has come to them from the statements of verse 28, the fulfilment of the promise which He has made for the future (verse 23). They think that the day has already come when they shall ask Him nothing, for He knows all things, and communicates to them the fulness of truth.

By this we believe that thou camest forth from God.—They had believed this before (verse 27), but here, as frequently, St. John remembers the develop-

ment of their faith. (Comp. Note on chap. ii. 11.) They find, in His knowledge of their thoughts (verse 19), and in the full solution which He gives to their difficulties, ground for a new faith ; and upon this new proof of His divinity they have a new faith in Him. (Comp. the instance of Nathanael’s faith at the end of chap. i.)

(31) Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe.—Comp. Note on chap. i. 50. Here, as there, the words do not necessarily ask a question; and, although many expositors prefer to take them interrogatively, a sense more in harmony with the context is got by understanding them as an assertion. Our Lord did not doubt their present faith (chap. xvii. 8); but He knew that the hour of their full illumination had not yet come, firmly as they believed it had. Their present light was as the flash of the meteor—brilliant, but passing away. The clear and steadfast light of day was in the future, of which He has spoken to them. They think the hour of full knowledge has come. He sees the time when they shall all be scattered and leave Him alone, close at hand. It is this thought which he expresses to them—“Now ye do believe : Behold, the hour cometh . . .”

(32) Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come.—Comp. Matt.

every man to his own,<sup>1</sup> and  
shall leave me alone: and  
yet I am not alone, because  
the Father is with me.

<sup>1</sup> Or, *his  
own  
home.*

(33) These things I have  
spoken unto you, that in  
me ye might have peace.  
In the world ye shall have

xxvi. 31 and 56. The hour is so  
clearly seen, and so immediately  
at hand, that it is spoken of as  
already present.

**Every man to his own.**—Or,  
*his own lodging* in Jerusalem, which  
must be here intended. That is,  
as the margin renders it, “to his  
own home.” (Comp. Note on chap.  
i. 11.)

And yet I am not alone,  
because the Father is with  
me.—They would each flee to his  
own place of sojourn. He, too,  
though apparently left alone, had  
His own home in the presence of  
the Father, which was ever with  
Him. The fact of their leaving  
Him could not in truth have added  
to His sense of loneliness. He  
must, even when surrounded by  
them, have always been alone.  
The thoughts of His mind were so  
infinitely beyond them, that the  
true sympathy which binds souls  
in companionship could never have  
had place. And yet He was never  
alone, for His life was one of con-  
stant communion with the Father.  
(Comp. the consciousness of this in  
chap. viii. 29.) Once only do we  
find the vision of the Father’s  
presence eclipsed for a moment by  
the thick darkness of the world’s  
sin; but the wail of agony, “My  
God, My God, why hast Thou for-  
saken Me?” (Matt. xvii. 46) is  
straightway followed by the assur-  
ance of His presence, “Father,  
into Thy hands I commend My  
spirit” (Luke xxiii. 46).

Alone and not alone. It was so

in the human life of our Lord; it  
is so in the life of His followers.  
There is a sense in which each one  
is alone; and there is a depth of  
being into which no human friend  
can ever enter. There is a loneli-  
ness which of itself would lead to  
despair, were it not that its very  
existence tells of and leads to  
the never-failing communion with  
God:—

“Who hath the Father and the Son  
May be left—but not alone.”

(33) These things I have  
spoken unto you . . . —At the  
conclusion of the discourse He  
sums up in a single thought what  
was the object of it, “Peace in  
Him. In the world, indeed, tribu-  
lation, but this as conquered in  
Him, and not interrupting the true  
peace in Him.” The thought is  
closely allied to that of the last  
verse, “Alone and not alone;”  
“Troubled, and yet having peace.”  
He had spoken of this from chap.  
xiv. 1 onwards, and from xv. 18—  
xvi. 4 specially of the tribulation  
which awaited them. (Comp. St.  
Paul’s experience of these contrasts  
in 2 Cor. iv. 8 *et seq.*)

**That in me ye might have  
peace.**—Comp. Notes on chaps.  
xiv. 27 and xv. 7.

**In the world ye shall have  
tribulation.**—The reading of the  
better MSS. is, “In the world ye  
have tribulation.” It is the general  
statement of their relation to the  
world. The two clauses answer to  
each other—the one defining the

tribulation : but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world.

A.D. 33

## CHAPTER XVII.—

<sup>(1)</sup> These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to

origin of their inner, the other that of their outer life. The life in the world is but the life as it is seen by others; the true life is that which is in communion with God through Christ, and that is one of never-failing peace, which no tribulation can ever effect. Peace is the Christian's birthright, and his joy no one taketh from him (verse 22, chap. xiv. 27).

But be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world.—The pronoun is strongly emphatic, “I have Myself overcome the world.” He speaks of the assured victory as though it were already accomplished. (See Note on verse 11 and chaps. xii. 31 and xiii. 31.) Here is the reason why they should take courage and be of good cheer. He is the Captain of their salvation, and has already won the victory. The enemies they fear, the world in which they have tribulation, are already captives following in the Conqueror’s train. They themselves have pledges of victory in and through His victory.

## XVII.

[3] LOVE MANIFESTED IN HIS INTERCESSORY PRAYER (chap. xvii. 1 — 26). HE PRAYS—

(a) For Himself ; the glory of the Son (verses 1—5);

(b) For the disciples ; their union with the Father and the Son (verses 6—19);

(c) For all believers ; their union (verses 20, 21); their communion with the Godhead (verses 22—24); which results from the revelation to them of the Father (verses 25, 26)].

<sup>(1)</sup> These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven.—Comp. Note on chap. xiv. 31. If the view there adopted is the correct one, it follows that the prayer of this chapter, as well as the discourses which preceded it, was uttered as they were preparing to leave the chamber after supper. The words “to heaven” ought not to be taken to imply that He looked up to the sky, and must, therefore, have been in the open air. The upward look is naturally expressive of feeling, and irrespective of place. This chapter contains, then, the words uttered by our Lord, with eyes lifted up to heaven, in prayer to the Father. It is often spoken of as the High Priest’s prayer (comp. verse 19). He who would understand it must remember that he is in the Holy of Holies, and must approach it with eyes and heart uplifted to the God to whom and by whom it was spoken.

Bengel speaks of this chapter as the simplest in word, and profoundest in thought, in the whole Bible. The key to the thought is in the presence of the Spirit, who shall guide into all truth (chap. xvi. 26).

Father, the hour is come.—“Father,” without any addition,

heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: <sup>(2)</sup> as thou hast given him power over all flesh," that he

<sup>a</sup> Matt.  
28. 18.

should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. <sup>(3)</sup> And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ,

as in verses 5, 21, 24. Comp. "Our Father," in the prayer taught to the disciples, and "Holy Father" and "Righteous Father" in verses 11 and 25. In the first petition of this prayer the disciples are not identified with Him, and yet He does not by the use of the singular person exclude them. Through Him they and all believers receive the spirit of adoption, and cry, as He cried "Abba, Father." For the thought of the hour, comp. chaps. xii. 23, 28, and xiii. 1, 31, 32.

**Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.**—What is meant by glorifying the Son is further explained in verse 5. But this implies the dark path of death, which has to be trodden before that glory will be attained. (Comp. chap. xii. 23 *et seq.*) The glorifying of the Father by the Son is the manifestation of God's glory in the completion of the Messianic work by the mission of the Advocate and the future victories of the Church. This is further explained in verses 2–4.

**(2) As thou hast given him power over all flesh.**—Better, *According as thou gavest Him . . .* This is the ground on which the prayer in verse 1 is based. (Comp. chaps. x. 36 and xiii. 3.) The glory for which He asks is in accordance with the decree which appointed His Messianic work.

"All flesh" represents a Greek translation of a Hebrew phrase.

It occurs again in Matt. xxv. 22; Mark. xiii. 20; Luke iii. 6; Acts ii. 17; Rom. iii. 20; 1 Cor. i. 29, and xv. 39; Gal. ii. 16; 1 Pet. i. 24. St. John uses it in this place only. Its special signification is humanity as such, considered in its weakness and imperfection.

**That he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.**—Literally, *That all whom thou gavest Him, He may give to them eternal life.* (Comp. vers. 6, and Note on chap. vi. 37 *et seq.*) The word "all" is in the Greek a neuter singular, and signifies collectively the whole body of humanity given to Christ. The word for "to them" is masculine and plural, and signifies the individual reception on the part of those to whom eternal life is given. (Comp. Notes on chap. vi. 39, 40.)

**(3) And this is life eternal.**—For these words, which are more frequent in St. John than in any other of the New Testament writers, comp. chaps. iii. 15, 16, 36; v. 24, 39; vi. 27, 40, 47, 54, 68; x. 28; xii. 25, 50; 1 John i. 2; ii. 15; iii. 15; v. 11, 13, 20. The thought of the previous verse is that the Messianic work of Christ is to give eternal life to those whom God has given Him. The thought of the following verse is that He has accomplished this work. In this verse He shows in what its accomplishment consists—viz., in revealing

whom thou hast sent.

<sup>(4)</sup> I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. <sup>(5)</sup> And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own

self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. <sup>(6)</sup> I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest

to men the only true God through Jesus Christ.

**That they might know thee the only true God.** — Better, *That they might recognise Thee as the only true God.* (Comp. Notes on chaps. i. 9 and xiv. 7.)

**And Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.** — *And Him, whom Thou didst send, Jesus, as Messiah.* Eternal life consists in the knowledge of the Father as the only Being answering to the ideal thought of God; and in this knowledge manifested in Him, whom God anointed and sent into the world to declare His attributes and character. Only in the Word made flesh can we hear the voice of mercy, forgiveness, love, fatherhood; which comes to men as the breath of life, so that they become living souls.

<sup>(4)</sup> I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work . . . — Better, *I glorified Thee on earth: I finished the work . . .*

The former sentence is explained by the latter. God was glorified in the completion of the Messianic work of Christ. For this conception of the work of life, which includes the whole life as manifesting God to man, comp. Notes on chaps. v. 36; ix. 4; x. 25 *et al.*

<sup>(5)</sup> And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self. — These words are exactly parallel with the commence-

ment of the previous verse. “I,” “Thou,” “Thee—Me,” “on earth,” “with Thine own self.” (Comp. chap. xiii. 31, 32.)

**With the glory which I had with thee before the world was.** — This clause admits of but one meaning—viz., that Jesus claimed for Himself the possession of the divine glory in His pre-existent state before the world was; and that He claimed this in personality distinct from, but in essence one with God. (Comp. chap. i. 1, and 18, and on the whole passage, Phil. ii. 4—9.) The special importance of the thought here is that it is uttered in the words of Christ Himself, and that these words are a prayer to the Father. There can be no explanation of verses 1—5 of this chapter, which denies that our Lord Jesus Christ claimed for Himself that He was divine, and co-eternal with the Father.

<sup>(6)</sup> I have manifested (better, *I manifested*) thy name unto the men which thou gavest me (better, *Thou hast given Me*) out of the world. — This manifestation of the name of God is the making Him known as the only true God, and the glorifying Him on earth of verses 3 and 4. For the special form in which the thought is expressed (“Thy name”), comp. Matt. vi. 9.

them me; and they have kept thy word. <sup>(7)</sup> Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou

hast given me are of thee.  
<sup>(8)</sup> For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they

He thinks of the disciples as a body separated from the world (comp. Note on chap. xv. 19), and as given to Him by the Father. (Comp. Note on chap. vi. 37.)

**Thine they were, and thou gavest** (better, *hast given*) **them me.**—The meaning of these words is that they were morally prepared by the earlier manifestation of God for the fuller manifestation in Christ. They were God's in more than name, and therefore, when Christ was revealed to them, they recognised Him of whom Moses and the prophets did speak. (Comp. chap. i. 37 *et seq.*, and especially Notes on chaps. v. 46; vi. 37; viii. 47.)

**And they have kept thy word.**—Comp. Notes on chaps. viii. 51, and xiv. 23. He says here, "Thy word," not "My word," because the thought of these verses (6—8) is that they were originally and were still the Father's. They had been given to the Son, but this was only the completion of the revelation of the Father to them. Christ's word was that of the Father who sent Him. (Comp. Notes on chaps. vii. 16; xii. 48, 49.)

**(7) Now they have known . . .**—Better, *Now they do know.* The word means, "They have come to know, and **do know.**" (Comp. Note on chap. xvi. 30.) This is the result of their spiritual training—in its fulness, indeed, still future, but regarded as in the immediate present.

**All things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.**—We ought to assign no limit to the extent of these words. The lesson He had been teaching them, and which they were about fully to know, was that the whole life of Christ—the words He had spoken (chap. xii. 49), the works He had done (chap. v. 36)—was a manifestation of the Father.

**(8) For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.**—Our Lord explains in this verse how the disciples attained to the knowledge He had spoken of in verse 7, and lays stress in the first place on His own work in teaching them, "I, on My part, have given unto them," and on the matter taught as that which the Father had committed unto Him (chap. xii. 49).

**And they have received them.**—Not less emphatic is the work of the disciples themselves. "They on their part received them." Others had been taught, and did not receive. The teaching was the same; the varying effect was in the heart of the hearer. (Comp. chap. i. 12 and 18.)

He has spoken of the teaching and the reception. He proceeds to the two-fold result.

**And have known** (better, *and knew*) **surely that I came out from thee.**—Comp. Notes on chaps. iii. 2, and xvi. 30.

**And they have believed** (better, *and they believed*) **that thou didst send me.**—The

have received *them*, and have known surely that I came out from thee,<sup>a</sup> and they have believed that thou didst send me. <sup>(9)</sup> I

<sup>a</sup> ch. 16.  
27.

pray for them : I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me ; for they are thine. <sup>(10)</sup> And all mine are thine,

addition of this clause is in part to be explained as the Hebrew fulness of expression, and in part as an advance on the truth, "I came out from Thee." That He came from God they knew by the harmony of His doctrine with the voice of God, which was already speaking in their consciences. But more than this, they believed Him to be the sent One, the Messiah, whom they expected (verse 3).

<sup>(9)</sup> **I pray for them : I pray not for the world.**—Better, *I am praying for them : I am not praying for the world.* Both pronouns are emphatic. "I who have during my work on earth taught them ;" "they who have received the truth" (verse 8). "I who am about to leave the world ;" "they who will remain in the world" (verse 11). The tense is the strict present, referring to the prayer which He is at this moment uttering, and not to His general practice, which the Authorised version may be taken to express. Against any limitation of the prayer of our Lord, see verse 21, and His own prayer for His enemies, "Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34). Comp. also His command to His disciples to pray for "them which despitefully used them" (Matt. v. 44). The present prayer was like that which pious Rabbis were accustomed to offer for their pupils. (Comp. Schöttgen's Note here.) It is from its very nature applicable

only to disciples. He is leaving them, and commands them to His Father's care.

**But for them which thou hast given me ; for they are thine.**—This is the special claim on which He commends them to the Father. They were the Father's before they were given to the Son. By that gift they have become the Father's more fully (verses 6—8). They are the Father's, for all things which are the Son's are the Father's, and all things which are the Father's are the Son's (verse 10).

<sup>(10)</sup> **And all mine are thine, and thine are mine.**—Better, *And all My things are Thine, and Thy things are Mine.* The Authorised version leaves the impression that the pronouns are masculine, and that persons are exclusively meant ; whereas the Greek words are all-inclusive, and assert absolute community in all things between the Father and the Son.

**And I am glorified in them.**—The division of verses is unfortunate, as the last words of this verse are closely connected with the last words of verse 9, and the general assertion which intervenes is a parenthesis. The thought is, "For they are Thine (and all My things are Thine, and Thy things are Mine), and I am glorified in them." The fact that Christ is glorified in them forms, then, a second reason for His special prayer for them. The tense is perfect. Its accomplishment is already in part

and thine are mine ; and I am glorified in them.  
<sup>(11)</sup> And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine

own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.  
<sup>(12)</sup> While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name : those that thou gavest me I have

realised (verses 6—8 ; comp. chap. xv. 8), and is more fully to be realised in that future of the Spirit's work which all through this chapter is regarded as present. (Comp. Note on chap. xvi. 14.)

**(11) And now I am no more in the world.**—The immediate future is still regarded as present. The words have a special reference to the interval between His death and the day of Pentecost, which would be for the disciples a time of darkness and danger, when they would have special need of the Father's care.

**Holy Father.**—Comp. verses 1, 24, 25. There is a special fitness in the word "Holy" here, as in opposition to the world. The disciples were left in the world, but they were not of the world (verse 14). These were spiritually God's children, separated from the world (verse 6), and He commits them to the Holy Father, that He may keep them from the evil of the world.

**Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.**—The reading is slightly doubtful, but if we take what would certainly seem to be the true text, the rendering should be, *Keep them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me.* (Comp. verse 12.) The Authorised version renders the same words by "through Thy name" in this verse, and by

"in Thy name" in verse 12. The thought appears to be that the revelation of the nature of God by Christ to the world (verse 6), was that which He Himself received from the Father. "I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak." (Comp. Note on chap. xii. 49.)

**That they may be one, as we are.**—This clause depends upon the words, "Keep them in Thy name." They had so far realised the revelation of God that they had known Christ's whole life to be the utterance of God to their spirits (verses 6—8). He prays that they may be kept in this knowledge in order that they may so know the Father through Him, as to become themselves one with the Father.

**(12) While I was with them in the world.**—Comp. the opening words of verse 11. During His presence with them there was not this special need for commanding them to the Father's care. His relation to them now is as that of a parent blessing and praying for His children before He is taken away from them. (Comp. chap. xiii. 33.)

**I kept them in thy name : those that thou gavest me I have kept.**—Better (comp. previous verse), *I kept them in Thy name which Thou gavest Me, and*

kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 109.  
<sup>8.</sup>

might be fulfilled.<sup>a</sup> <sup>(13)</sup> And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the

*guarded them.* The pronoun is emphatic. "While I was in the world *I* kept them. I am now praying that Thou wouldest keep them." The words "kept" and "guarded" differ slightly in meaning, the former pointing to the preservation in the truth revealed to them, and the latter to the watchfulness by means of which this result was obtained. The former may be compared to the feeding of the flock, the latter to the care which protects from the wild beasts around. (Comp. chap. x. 28—30.)

**And none of them is lost, but the son of perdition.—** Better, *None of them perished, except the son of perdition.* The tense is the same as that of the word "guarded." The Good Shepherd watched His flock, and such was His care that none perished but the "son of perdition." Of him the words carefully state that "he perished." He, then, was included in "them which Thou gavest Me." For him there was the same preservation and the same guardianship as for those who remained in the fold. The sheep wandered from the flock, and was lost by his own act. (Comp. especially Notes on chap. vi. 37—39 and 71. See also chap. xviii. 9.)

The term "son of perdition," is a well-known Hebrew idiom, by which the lack of qualitative adjectives is supplied by the use of the abstract substantives, which express that quality. A disobedient child is, e.g., "a son of disobedience;"

other common instances are "children of light," "children of darkness." A "son of perdition" is one in whose nature there is the quality expressed by "perdition." The phrase is used in Isa. lvii. 4 to express the apostasy of the Israelites (in English version, "children of transgression"). It occurs once again in 2 Thess. ii. 3, of the "man of sin." It is used, in the Gospel of Nicodemus, of the devil. In the present passage it is difficult to express the meaning in English, because we have no verb of the same root as the abstract substantive "perdition," and no abstract substantive of the same root as the verb "perish." No exact translation can therefore give in English the point of our Lord's words, "And none of them perished except him whose nature it was to perish." Here, as often (comp. Note on chap. x. 16), the reader who can consult Luther's German will find that he exactly hits the sense: "Und ist keiner von ihnen verloren ohne das verlorne Kind."

**That the scripture might be fulfilled.—** See Note on chap. xiii. 18, and comp. Acts i. 20.

<sup>(13)</sup> **And now come I to thee.** Comp. the first words of verse 12, with which these are in contrast.

**And these things I speak in the world.—** The thought is that He is about to leave them, and that He utters this prayer in their hearing (comp. chap. xi. 42) that they may have the support of knowing that He who had kept them while with them, had solemnly

world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. <sup>(14)</sup> I have given them thy word ; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the

world, even as I am not of the world. <sup>(15)</sup> I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. <sup>(16)</sup> They

committed them to His Father's care. The prayer itself was a lesson, and this thought is to be remembered in the interpretation of it.

**That they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.—** Comp. Notes on chaps. xv. 11 and xvi. 24. The joy here thought of is that which supported Him in all the sorrow and loneliness of His work on earth, and came from the never-failing source of the Father's presence with Him. (Comp. Note on chap. xvi. 32.) He would have them fulfilled with the abundance of this joy.

<sup>(14)</sup> I have given them thy word ; and the world hath hated them.—The terms "I" and "the world" are opposed to each other. The world's hatred followed necessarily from the fact that Christ had given them God's word, and that by it they had been separated from the world. (Comp. Note on verse 6.)

**Because they are not of the world.—** Comp. Note on chap. xv. 18.

<sup>(15)</sup> I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world.—The thought may naturally have come to their minds that they would be most effectually kept from the hatred and danger of which He had spoken if they were to be with Him taken out of the world. But there is for them a work in the world (verses 18, 24). He has finished the work His Father

gave Him to do ; He has glorified the Father on the earth (verse 4). There is a work for them to glorify Him (verse 10), and He prays not that they should be taken out of the world before their work is done. The Christian ideal is not freedom from work, but strength to do it ; not freedom from temptation, but power to overcome it ; not freedom from suffering, but joy in an abiding sense of the Father's love ; not absence from the world, but grace to make the world better for our presence ; not holy lives driven from the world, and living apart from it, but holy lives spent in the world and leavening it.

**But that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.—** Comp. Matt. vi. 13. Is "the evil" or "the evil one" meant ? The usage of St. John is, beyond question, in favour of the masculine. The only other passages where he uses the word in the singular are 1 John ii. 13, 14; iii. 12; v. 18, 19. We have to bear in mind also that the present passage occurs in the second "Lord's Prayer," and that His prayer for them may with probability be interpreted in the same sense as the words in which He taught them to pray. On the whole, therefore, it seems likely, but yet is by no means certain, that we ought to read here, "that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one."

<sup>(16)</sup> They are not of the

are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.  
 (17) Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. (18) As thou hast

sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.  
 (19) And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that

**world.**—These words are repeated from verse 14. The thought of their being still in the world leads on to their mission in the world, and the prayer passes from the thought of preservation to that of their sanctification for their work. Their fitness for this is prominent in this verse. Already they are not of the world, even as He is not of the world.

(17) **Sanctify them through thy truth.**—Better, *in Thy truth*. Truth was the sphere in which their sanctification was to take place. They had through Christ received the Father's word, which was truth, and had passed into a new region of life, separate from the world (verses 6—8, 14—16). He has prayed that the Father would preserve them in this, and now He prays further that the Father would in this new region of life set them apart for the work to which He had sent them (verse 18).

The idea at the root of the word rendered "sanctify," is not holiness, but separation. It is opposed not to what is impure, but to what is common, and is constantly used in the Greek of the Old Testament for the consecration of persons and things to the service of God. Hence our Lord can use it of Himself in chap. x. 36, and in this context (verse 19; these are the only places where it occurs in St. John's writings). He was Himself "set apart and sent into the world." He has to send them into the world in the

same way (verse 18, and chap. x. 36), and prays that they may be in the same way consecrated for their work.

**Thy word is truth.**—There is a strong emphasis in the pronoun "*Thy word is truth.*" This word they had kept (verses 6—8). It had become the region of their life. They are to be the channels through which it is to pass to others (verse 20). They are already in the higher sphere of truth, in which their entire consecration is to take place, when the gifts of the Holy Spirit shall descend upon them.

(18) **As thou hast sent me into the world.**—Better, *As Thou didst send Me*. The tense points out the definite moment of His mission. (Comp. chap. x. 36.)

**So have I also sent them into the world.**—Better, *I also sent*. Comp. Matt. x. 5; Luke vi. 13. In the very word "Apostles" their mission was contained; but the thought here comprehends the immediate future of their wider mission. (Comp. Note on chap. xx. 21.)

(19) **And for their sakes I sanctify myself.**—Comp. Note on verse 17. The consecration here thought of is that to the work which was immediately before Him—the offering Himself as a sacrifice. The word was in frequent use in the special sense of an offering or sacrifice set apart to God. As a New Testament example of this, comp. Rom. xv. 16. By this consecration

they also might be sanctified through the truth.<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>(20)</sup> Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on

<sup>1</sup> Or,  
truly  
sancti-  
fied.

me through their word ;  
<sup>(21)</sup> that they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in

of Himself—which in a wider sense is for all men, but in the special sense is “for their sakes”—He will, as both Priest and Sacrifice, enter into the Holy of Holies of the heavenly temple, and will send the Holy Ghost, who will consecrate them.

**That they also might be sanctified through the truth.**—Better, as in the margin, . . . *might be truly sanctified*. The words “they also” are emphatic, answering to “their sakes” and “myself” in the preceding clause.

**(20) Neither pray I for these alone.**—Comp. Note on verse 9. The thought of the work to which the Apostles are to be consecrated and sent, leads on to the wider thought of the Church which shall believe through their word, and the prayer is enlarged to include them.

**But for them also which shall believe on me through their word.**—All the best MSS. read, “but for them also which believe ;” but the sense is not affected by the change. As we have again and again found in these chapters, the future of the Church is so immediately in our Lord’s thoughts that it is spoken of as actually present. “Their word” is their witness concerning Him through which men should believe (chap. xv. 27). He had manifested the nature of God to them ; and they who had received His word and witnessed His work would become, by the indwelling

of the Spirit in them, the means of extending this revelation of God to others. They would do this by means of the word which, in His name, they would preach. (Comp. Rom. x. 14 *et seq.*)

**(21) That they all may be one**—i.e., both “these” (the Apostles) and “them also which shall believe on Me through their word” (the whole body of believers in all times and places). He expresses, in this grand thought of the unity of the whole Church, the fulness of the purpose of His prayer.

**As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.**—The insertion of “art,” which, as the italics show, is not in the original text, weakens the sense. It is better, therefore, to omit it. The word “one,” in the second clause, is of doubtful authority, and has the appearance of a gloss. The probable reading, therefore, is, *That they all may be one ; as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us*; and the meaning is that the union of the Church may be of the same essential nature as that between the Father and the Son ; yea, that the union of the Church may result from the union of individual members with the Father through the Son. (Comp. chaps. xiv. 23 xv. 4—10 *et al.*) The Father in the Son and the Son in the Father ; both Father and Son taking up

us : that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. <sup>(22)</sup> And the glory which thou gavest me I

have given them ; that they may be one, even as we are one : <sup>(23)</sup> I in them, and thou in me, that they

their abode in the believer, and the believer, therefore, in the Father and the Son. This is the ideal of the unity of the Church of Christ ; and if this union with God is realised by each individual, it necessarily follows that all the individuals will be one with each other. (Comp. Eph. iv. 4 *et seq.*)

**That the world may believe that thou hast sent me.**

—The result of the union of believers with God, and therefore with each other, will be that the world will see in it a proof of the divine origin of Christianity, and will believe that the Father sent the Son into the world. As this will be the result, it is thought of as the purpose of the prayer for the whole body of believers. Instances of this result crowd involuntarily upon the mind. The brotherhood of Christians has ever been the witness to their common Fatherhood in God. The divisions of Christendom have ever been the weakness of the Church and the proof to the world that, inasmuch as they are divided, they cannot be of God. (Comp. Note on chap. xiii. 35.)

<sup>(22)</sup> **And the glory which thou gavest me** (better, *hast given Me*) **I have given them.**—Comp. chap. xiii. 32, and in this chapter verses 1, 5, and 24. Here, as all through this Intercessory Prayer, the future which immediately grows out of the present is regarded as present ; the fulness of the glory which awaits Him at His

Father's right hand is thought of as already given to Him ; and the believers who have become, and will become, one with Him, to whom He has given eternal life (verse 2), are thought of as sharers in it. It is the thought which is expanded by St. Paul when he speaks of the children being "heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ ; if we suffer with Him to the end that we may be also glorified with Him" (Rom. viii. 17) ; and by St. John when he speaks of "children of God being like Him because we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 1, 2). In the original the pronoun "*I*" is emphatically expressed. "The glory which Thou hast given Me," our Lord's words seem to mean, "I have on My part given to them. I have fulfilled the work which Thou hast given Me to do. I have made and declared an at-one-ment between man and God. My work is done. I pray that Thou wouldest fulfil Thine own."

**That they may be one, even as we are one.**—This is here expressed, in addition to the thought of the last verse, as the purpose for which He has given to them the glory which the Father has given Him. It is future in the union of the glory of heaven ; it is present in the realisation of heaven now, in those who have the one common hope of their calling.

<sup>(23)</sup> **I in them, and thou in me.**—These words are best regarded as a parenthesis more

may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. <sup>(24)</sup> Father, <sup>a</sup> I will

<sup>a</sup> ch. 12.  
26.

that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before

explicitly setting forth the thought of the union of the Father, the Son, and the believer. The thought is continued from the last verse, "That they may be one even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." It is the thought which the words of Christ have uttered again and again, and which we yet feel that no words can utter. The disciples heard the words immediately after they had heard the allegory of the true vine (chap. xv.); and the fullest meaning of separate words and phrases in these chapters is best arrived at by remembering that they were not uttered as separate words and phrases, but that they were spoken as a whole, and should be read as a whole; and that the most unfathomable of them were spoken in prayer from the Son to the Father.

**That they may be made perfect in one.**—Better, . . . unto one. The unity is the result of their being made perfect. (Comp. Heb. x. 14; and 1 John ii. 5; v. 12, 17, 18.)

**And that the world may know that thou hast sent me.**—Better, . . . didst send Me. Comp. verse 21. "That the world may know" (recognise) here is parallel to "that the world may believe" in the earlier verse. We are to regard it, therefore, as another instance of the repeated

expression of the fulness of thought; and this is borne out by the parallel in chaps. xiii. 35, and xiv. 31. The thought which has been introduced here of the conviction of the unbelieving world, seems to be opposed to the context. The prayer is that the world, seeing in its midst the power which binds men together in unity, may believe and know that this is of God, who sent Christ into the world, and may accept for themselves the message of love which the "sent of God" has brought unto them. (Comp. Note on chap. iii. 16.)

<sup>(24)</sup> **Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.**—Better, *Father, I will that that which Thou hast given Me, even they may be with Me where I am.* The thought of the unity of the Church is still prominent. It is conceived as one collective whole, "that which Thou hast given Me" (comp. chap. vi. 39), and the members of it are thought of as individuals composing the whole, "even they may be."

The "I will" expresses the consciousness that His will was that of the Father, and is the prayer of Him who is one with the Father. He had before said, "I pray" (verse 9, and Note on verse 20), but the thought of the union with the Father, expressed in verse 23, leads to the fuller expression of His confidence that the prayer will be answered.

the foundation of the world.  
<sup>(25)</sup> O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

<sup>(26)</sup> And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

For the words, "With Me where I am," comp. Note on chap. xiv. 3.

**That they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.**—Comp. Note on verse 22. That we are to think of the future glory of the divine-human nature of Christ, is shown by the addition of the words, "which Thou hast given Me." The pre-incarnate glory of the Son was of His divine nature only, and is not, therefore, spoken of as given to Him, nor could it be given to those who believe in Him (verse 22). That with which the Father has glorified the Son is "the glory which He had with the Father before the world was" (verse 5); but it is the Son of Man who is glorified with it, and therefore it is that human nature is made capable of receiving it.

**For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.**

—Comp. Note on verse 5.

<sup>(25)</sup> O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee. —Better, . . . *The world indeed knew Thee not.* In these closing words of His prayer, our Lord again solemnly appeals to the Father (comp. Notes on verses 1, 5, and 11), but now with the special thought of the Father's righteousness. This thought follows upon the prayer that those whom the Father had given Him may be where He is, and behold the divine glory; and the connection seems to

be in the thought that sinful humanity cannot see God and live. The world, indeed, knew not God (comp. chap. xv. 21, and xvi. 3), but the Son knew God, and the disciples had recognised that He had been sent by God, and in their knowledge of Him had passed through a moral change, by which they were no longer of the world, but were sons of God (chap. i. 12).

<sup>(26)</sup> **And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it.**—The Greek word here rendered "declared" is of the same root as the verb rendered "known" in the previous verse. It is better to preserve this connection by rendering the clause, *And I made known Thy name unto them, and will make it known.* His whole teaching had been a making known of the name, character, will of God, to them. In part this had been received, but in part only. The first steps in the spiritual lessons had been taken, but in His Presence in the Paraclete He will guide them into all truth, and make known to hearts quickened to receive it, the love of God which passeth knowledge.

**That the love wherewith thou hast loved (better *didst love*) me may be in them, and I in them.**—Comp. Note on chap. xv. 9. The thought of Christ's prayer in this verse is expanded in St. Paul's prayer in Eph. iii. 17—19. It is more than that God

CHAPTER XVIII.—<sup>A.D. 23</sup>  
<sup>(a)</sup> When Jesus had spoken

may love the disciples, even as He loved the Son; it is that they may so know the nature of God that this love may be in them, dwelling in them, as the principle of their life. And then the thought passes on to that fulness which has been present all through this last discourse and prayer, “and I in them.” (Comp. verse 23.) Going from them, to be yet with them; to be with them not only as a Person without, but as a power within. “I in them” are the last words of the Intercessory Prayer. The words remain in all their comfort for them in whom “Christ is formed;” in all their encouragement for doubting hearts seeking to know God; in all their warning for hearts that do not seek His presence. They are the prayer of Him who knoweth that the Father always heareth Him.

## XVIII.

[5. The Climax of Unbelief.  
Voluntary Surrender  
and Crucifixion of  
Jesus (chaps. xviii. 1—  
xix. 42).]

- (1) THE BETRAYAL AND APPREHENSION (verses 1—11).
- (2) THE TRIALS BEFORE THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES (verses 12—27):
  - (a) Before Annas (verses 12—23);
  - (b) Before Caiaphas (verse 24).
  - (c) Denied by St. Peter (verses 17, 25, 27).
- (3) THE TRIALS BEFORE THE ROMAN PROCONSUL (chaps. xviii. 28—xix. 16):

these words, he went forth with his disciples over the

- (a) *The first examination. The kingdom of truth* (verses 28—40);
  - (b) *The second examination. The scourging and mock royalty* (chap. xix. 1—6);
  - (c) *The third examination. The power from above* (verses 7—11);
  - (d) *The public trial and committal* (verses 12—16).
- (4) JESUS SUBMITS TO DEATH (chap. xix. 17—42):
- (a) *The Crucifixion* (verses 17—24);
  - (b) *The sayings on the Cross* (verses 25—30);
  - (c) *The proof of physical death* (verses 31—37);
  - (d) *The body in the Sepulchre* (verses 38—42).]

In this chapter we again come upon ground which is common to St. John and the earlier Gospels. Each of the Evangelists has given us a narrative of the trial and death of our Lord. The narrative of each naturally differs by greater or less fulness, or as each regarded the events from his own point of view, from that of all the others. It is only with that which is special to St. John that the notes on his narrative have to deal. The general facts and questions arising from them are treated in the notes on the parallel passages in the other commentaries of this series.

<sup>(1)</sup> He went forth with his disciples.—i.e., He went forth from the city. (Comp. chap. xiv. 31.)

**The brook Cedron.**—The Greek words mean exactly “the

brook Cedron,<sup>a</sup> where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples. <sup>(2)</sup> And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oft-

<sup>a</sup> Matt.  
26. 36.  
<sup>b</sup> Matt.  
26. 47.

times resorted thither with his disciples. <sup>(3)</sup> Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither

winter torrent Kedron," and occur again in the LXX. of 2 Kings xv. 23, and 3 Kings xv. 13. The name is formed from a Hebrew word which means "black." The torrent was the "Niger" of Judæa, and was so called from the colour of its turbid waters, or from the darkness of the chasm through which they flowed. The name seems to have been properly applied not so much to the torrent itself as the ravine through which it flowed, on the east of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives. Its sides are for the most part precipitous, but here and there paths cross it, and at the bottom are cultivated strips of land. Its depth varies, but in some places it is not less than 100 feet. (Comp. article, "Kidron," in Kitto's *Biblical Cyclopædia*, vol. ii., p. 731; and for the reading see *Excursus B: Some Variations in the Text of St. John's Gospel.*)

**Where was a garden.**—Comp. Matt. xxvi. 36. St. John does not record the passion of Gethsemane, but this verse indicates its place in the narrative. (Comp. Note on chap xii. 27.)

**(2) And Judas also, which betrayed.**—Better, . . . who was betraying Him. The original word is a present participle, and marks the Betrayal as actually in progress.

**For Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.**—This is one of the instances of St.

John's exact knowledge of the incidents which attended the Jerusalem life of our Lord. (Comp. *Introduction*, p. 6.) All the Evangelists narrate the coming of Judas. John only remembers that the spot was one belonging, it may be, to a friend or disciple, where Jesus was in the habit of going with His disciples, and that Judas therefore knew the place, and knew that he would probably find them there.

**(3) A band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees.**—Better, *the band, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees*. The other Gospels tell us of a "great multitude" (Matt.), a "multitude" (Mark and Luke). St. John uses the technical word for the Roman cohort. It was the garrison band from Fort Antonia, at the north-east corner of the Temple. This well-known "band" is mentioned again in the New Testament (in verse 12; Matt. xxvii. 27; Mark xv. 16; Acts xxi. 31). The word occurs also in Acts x. 1 ("the Italian band") and xxvii. 1 ("Augustus' band"). The Authorised version misleads, by closely connecting in one clause two distinct things, "a band of men and officers." The band was Roman; the "officers" were the Temple servants, of whom we read in chap. vii. 32 and 45. These were sent here, as there, by the chief priests and Pharisees, with Judas for their guide, and their

with lanterns and torches and weapons. <sup>(4)</sup> Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? <sup>(5)</sup> They answered

him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. <sup>(6)</sup> As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went

authority was supported by the military power.

**Lanterns and torches and weapons.**—Better, *with torches and lamps* (Matt. xxv. 1) and arms. The torches and lamps were part of the regular military equipment for night service. Dionysius describes soldiers rushing out of their tents with torches and lamps in the same words which are used here (chap. xi. 40). They are not mentioned in the other Gospels. St. Matthew and St. Mark describe the “weapons” as “swords and staves.”

<sup>(4)</sup> Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come (better, *were coming*) upon him.—Comp. Matt. xxvi. 45.

Went forth and said unto them, Whom seek ye?—*i.e.*, probably, went forth from the garden itself. (Comp. Note on verse 26.) Other possible interpretations are, “went forth from the depth of the garden;” or, “went forth from the circle of the disciples standing round;” or, “went forth from the shade of the tree into the moonlight.” For the word, comp. verse 1, and Matt. xiv. 14. The kiss of Judas, mentioned in all the earlier Gospels, must be placed here between “went forth” and “said unto them.”

For the question, comp. Matt. xxvi. 50. Jesus will boldly face

the danger, and direct it upon Himself, that the disciples may be saved from it (verse 8).

<sup>(5)</sup> They answered him, **Jesus of Nazareth.**—He was known to many of them (chap. vii. 32, 46; Matt. xxvi. 55); but this is probably an official declaration of the person with whose apprehension they are charged.

I am he.—Comp. Notes on chap. viii. 18, 58.

And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.—He had advanced to give the signal of the kiss (verse 4), and had again retreated, and was now standing with them. He is mentioned in accordance with the vivid impression which the fact left upon the Apostle’s mind. Judas, who had been one of them, who had been present with them, and had received bread from his Master’s hand on that very night, was now standing with the officers of the Sanhedrin and the Roman band, who had come to capture Him! The position of the words suggests also that Judas was in some way specially connected with the fact that on hearing the words “I am He,” they fell to the ground, as though fear passed from him to those with him.

<sup>(6)</sup> They went backward, and fell to the ground.—There is nothing in the narrative to

backward, and fell to the ground. <sup>(7)</sup> Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. <sup>(8)</sup> Jesus an-

swered, I have told you that I am *he*: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: <sup>(9)</sup> that the saying might be fulfilled,

suggest that our Lord put forth miraculous power to cause this terror. The impression is rather that it was produced by the majesty of His person, and by the answer which to Jewish ears conveyed the unutterable name, "Jehovah" (I AM). (Comp. Note on chap. viii. 24, 25.) Guilt trembled before the calmness of innocence. Man fell to the ground before the presence of God. To Judas the term must have been familiar, and have brought back a past which may well have made him tremble at the present. To the officers the voice came from Him of whom they had been convinced before that "Never man spake like this man" (chap. vii. 46). They have come to take Him by force, but conscience paralyses all their intentions, and they lie helpless before Him. He will surrender Himself because His hour is come (chap. xvii. 1); but His life no one taketh from Him. For this sense of awe in the presence of Christ, comp. the account of the cleansing of the Temple in chap. ii. 14 *et seq.*

**(7) Then asked he them again.** — Their fear has passed away, so that we are not to think, as men sometimes do, that they were struck to the ground helpless. His thought is still of saving those who are with Him. The question brings the same formal answer. They have no warrant to take any of those who are with him. They took only Jesus of Nazareth.

**(8) If therefore ye seek me,**

let these go their way.—It may be that some of the Roman cohort, not knowing Jesus, were already laying hands on the disciples. In any case, they are exposed to this danger; and the Good Shepherd, who Himself goes forth to meet the danger, will shield the flock from it.

**(9) That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake.** — Comp. chap. xvii. 12. The quotation is in many ways suggestive. (1) It is not verbally accurate, *i.e.*, St. John, quoting the words of Christ, which he has himself recorded a few verses before, is at no pains to reproduce it word for word, but is satisfied in giving the substance of it. This throws light on the general literary habits and feelings of this age and race, and it is in full harmony with the usual practice of quotation in the New Testament.

(2) St. John quotes with an application to temporal persecution that which had been spoken of spiritual persecution. This illustrates the kind of way in which words are said to be "fulfilled" in more than one sense. Striking words fix themselves in the mind, and an event occurs which illustrates their meaning, and it is said therefore to fulfil them, though of each fulfilment it can be only part. (Comp. especially Notes on chaps. ii. 17, and xii. 38 *et seq.*) (3) The quotation shows that in the thought of St. John himself, the prayer recorded in chap. xvii. is no

which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.<sup>(10)</sup> Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. <sup>(11)</sup> Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father

<sup>a</sup> ch. 17.  
<sup>12</sup>

1 And  
Annas  
sent  
Christ  
bound  
unto  
Caiaphas  
the high  
priest,  
ver. 24.

hath given me, shall I not drink it?

<sup>(12)</sup> Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, <sup>(13)</sup> and led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>(14)</sup> Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the

résumé of the words of our Lord, but an actual record of His prayer: he quotes the "saying" as fulfilled, just as he would have quoted a passage from the Old Testament scriptures.

<sup>(10)</sup> Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it . . . — Comp. Matt. xxvi. 51. The fact is recorded by all the Evangelists. St. John only tells us that it was done by Peter, and that the servant's name was Malchus. He is also careful to note, as St. Luk does too, that it was the "right ear."

<sup>(11)</sup> Put up thy sword into the sheath.—Comp. Matt. xxvi. 52. Here again St. John's narrative is more vivid and exact. St. Matthew has "place" for "sheath."

The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? — Comp. Matt. xx. 22; xxvi. 39. This is the only instance of the occurrence of this familiar imagery in St. John. St. Peter's act is one of opposition to what Jesus Himself knew to be the will of the Father. There is in the words a tender trustfulness which robs the cup of all its bitterness— "The cup which My Father hath

given Me." They are, as it were, an echo of the prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, which is not recorded by St. John. It is the Father to whom He has prayed, and solemnly committed the disciples (chap. xvii.); the Father whose presence never leaves Him (chap. xvi. 32); the Father into whose hands He is about from the cross to command His Spirit (Luke xxiii. 46.)

<sup>(12)</sup> Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews.—A stop should be placed after "captain." The "band and the captain" were the Roman cohort (comp. Note on verse 3) and their tribune (*Chiliarch*; comp. Mark vi. 21). The "officers of the Jews" were, as before, the Temple servants (see above, verse 3), and the apparitors of the Sanhedrin.

Took Jesus, and bound him.—Comp. Matt. xxvi. 50, and xxvii. 2.

<sup>(13, 14)</sup> And led him away to Annas first.—Comp. Luke iii. 2, and Acts iv. 6. Annas had been high priest, A.D. 7—14. This trial was probably a preliminary investigation, distinct from the formal

Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>(15)</sup> And Simon Peter fol-

<sup>b</sup> Matt.  
26. 58.  
<sup>a</sup> ch. 11.  
50.

lowed Jesus,<sup>b</sup> and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in

trial before Caiaphas, narrated in the earlier Gospels. (Comp. verses 19 and 24.)

**For he was father in law to Caiaphas.**—The personal relationship between Annas and Caiaphas, who became high priest in A.D. 25, had led to a closeness of connection in official duties, which makes it difficult, with our partial knowledge of the circumstances, to trace the position taken by each in the trial of our Lord. This remark of St. John's suggests that Annas may have occupied part of the high priest's palace. He had been high priest. He is called high priest in the following year (Acts iv. 6). His age would have given him authority in the Sanhedrin, which Caiaphas himself is not likely to have questioned, and he may have been President of the Sanhedrin or Father of the *Beth Din* (House of Judgment). Whether officially, or personally, or both, he was, from the Jewish point of view, a person whose counsel and influence were of the utmost importance, and to him they bring Jesus for this doctrinal investigation (verse 19); while it is necessary that He should be sent to the legal high priest for official trial in the presence of the Sanhedrin (verse 24), before being handed over to the civil power (verse 28). It does not follow that the high priest (Caiaphas) was not present at this investigation; but it was altogether of an informal character.

Which was the high priest

that same year.—On this clause, and the whole of the following verse, comp. Notes on chap. xi. 49—52. The prophecy is quoted now that its fulfilment is close at hand, and that the act of Caiaphas is about to lead to it.

<sup>(15)</sup> **And Simon Peter followed Jesus**—Better, *And Simon Peter was following Jesus.* (Comp. Matt. xxvi. 58.)

**Another disciple.**—The reading is not certain, but the majority of the better MSS. support the text of the authorised version. Others have, "*The other disciple*," which would mean, "*The well-known disciple*." It has been usual to understand that John himself is intended by this designation, and this opinion agrees with the general reticence of the Gospel with regard to him. (Comp. chaps. i. 40; xiii. 23; xix. 26; and *Introduction*, p. 15.) It agrees also with the fact that Peter and John are elsewhere found in special connection with each other (Luke xxii. 8; Acts i. 13; iii. 1; iii. 3, 4, 11; iv. 13, 19; viii. 14). We are warranted, therefore, in saying that this opinion is probable, but not in assuming that it is necessarily true, as is often done. It may be, for instance, that by this term the Evangelist indicates his brother James, who is never mentioned in this Gospel. The fact that he is himself called "*the disciple whom Jesus loved*" (chap. xiii. 23, and xix. 26; comp. *Introduction*, p. 15), is against rather than for the opinion that he

with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. <sup>(16)</sup> But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and

brought in Peter. <sup>(17)</sup> Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also *one* of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. <sup>(18)</sup> And the servants and officers stood there, who had made

is here called "another disciple." If we adopt the reading, "*the other disciple*," the opinion has more support.

**Was known unto the high priest.**—How he was known we have no means of judging. We may, however, note that the name "John" occurs among the names of the kindred of the high priest in Acts iv. 6.

**Into the palace of the high priest.**—Better, perhaps, *into the court of the high priest*. (Comp. Matt. xxvi. 3, 58, 69.) St. John uses the word elsewhere only of the sheepfold (chap. x. 1, 16). It has been established beyond doubt that the title "high priest" may have been and often was given to those who had held the sacred office. We cannot, therefore, say positively that it is not here given to Annas. It is, however, in the highest degree improbable that it is given in this chapter, after the words of verse 13, to Annas and Caiaphas without distinction. The writer has in that verse clearly marked out Caiaphas as the high priest that year, and consistency requires that we should uniformly understand him to be designated by the title.

The apparent difficulty here is met by the remark in verse 13, that Annas was father-in-law to Caiaphas. (See Note there.)

<sup>(16)</sup> But Peter stood at the door without—*i.e.*, at the door of the court. He remained here with the crowd. Jesus as a prisoner, and the other disciple as a friend of the high priest, went into the court.

**Unto her that kept the door.**—Comp. Acts xii. 13 and 2 Sam. iv. 6 (LXX.). That women "kept the door" among the Jews we know from Josephus (*Ant.* vii. 2, § 1).

<sup>(17)</sup> On Peter's denials, comp. Matt. xxvi. 69—75, and see in this Gospel chap. xiii. 38.

**Art not thou also *one* of this man's disciples?**—*i.e.*, "Thou as well as thy friend, whom I know." There is no charge brought against him. The words are apparently simply words of recognition, or as furnishing a reason for admitting him with his friend, but Peter is conscious that he had attempted to kill, and had succeeded in wounding, one of the high priest's servants. He therefore dreads this recognition.

<sup>(18)</sup> **And the servants and officers stood there.**—*i.e.*, in the quadrangular court. The "servants" are the household servants or slaves of the high priest. The officers are the Temple servants. (Comp. Note on verse 3.)

**A fire of coals.**—In the Greek

a fire of coals ; for it was cold : and they warmed themselves : and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

(19) The high priest then asked Jesus of his dis-

ciples, and of his doctrine.  
(20) Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world ; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort ; and in secret have I

this phrase is expressed by one word which occurs again in the New Testament in chap. xxi. 9 ; and in the LXX. in Eccl. xi. 30, 32 ; and 4 Macc. ix. 20. It means a glowing fire. One of the Greek translators (Aquila) uses it in Ps. cxix. 4 (English version cxx. 4 : "coals of juniper"—that is, of the broom plant).

**Peter stood with them and warmed himself.**—It is implied that the other disciple had been admitted into the house. As the houses were usually constructed, the court would be visible from the interior. Peter has already been identified as a disciple. To stand aloof would have been to call further attention to himself. He joins the company, therefore, round the fire.

(19) **The high priest then asked Jesus.**—Comp. Note on verse 15. By the "high priest" is probably meant Caiaphas, though this preliminary investigation was held before Annas, and in his house, or that part of the high priest's palace occupied by him.

**Of his disciples, and of his doctrine.**—This was the general subject of a series of questions. He asked, we may think, about the number of Christ's followers ; the aim they had in view ; the principles which He had taught them. The object of the questions was

apparently to find some technical evidence in Christ's own words, on which they may support the charges they are about to bring against Him in the legal trial before Caiaphas.

(20) **I spake openly to the world.**—He does not distinctly answer the question about His disciples, but His words imply that all may have been His disciples. The pronoun is strongly emphatic ; "I am one," His words mean, "who spake plainly and to all men." "My followers have not been initiated into secret mysteries, nor made conspirators in any political organisation. I have not been a leader, and they have not been members, of a party."

**I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort.**—The better reading omits the article before "synagogue," as in chap. vi. 59, and reads for the last clause, *where all the Jews resort*. "In synagogue" is an adverbial phrase, as we say "in church." His constant custom was to teach "in synagogue," and in Jerusalem He taught in the temple itself, which was the resort of all the leaders of the people. This refers to His general custom, and does not, of course, exclude His teaching in other places. The point is that during His public ministry He

said nothing. (21) Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

(22) And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck

<sup>1</sup> Or, with  
a rod.

Jesus with the palm of his hand,<sup>1</sup> saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?

(23) Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

(24) Now Annas had sent

was constantly in the habit of teaching under the authority of the officers of the synagogues and the temple. That was the answer as to what His doctrine had been.

**And in secret have I said nothing.**—His private teaching of the disciples is, of course, not excluded, but that was only the exposition of His public doctrine. There was nothing in it such as they understood by “secret teaching.” It was unlike “the leaven of the Pharisees which was hypocrisy;” for in it there was “nothing covered,” “nothing hid.” (Comp. chap. xii. 1—3.)

(21) **Why askest thou me?**—Comp. chap. v. 31. The pronoun “Me” is not the emphatic word as it is generally taken to be. The stress is on the interrogative, “*Why*, for what purpose, dost thou ask Me? If you want witnesses, ask them which heard Me.”

**Behold, they know what I said.**—Better, *behold, these know what I said.* He pointed probably to some who were then present. In the next verse there is a reference to the “officers” who, as we know from chap. vii. 32, 46, had heard this doctrine.

(22) **With the palm of his hand.**—The Greek word occurs again in the New Testament only in chap. xix. 3. and Mark xiv. 65.

It is uncertain whether it means here a blow with the hand, or, as the margin renders it, “with a rod.” The word originally means a stroke with a rod, but in classical usage it acquired also the meaning of a slap in the face, or box on the ear, and the corresponding verb is certainly used in this sense in Matt. v. 39. We may gather from Acts xxiii. 2 that a blow on the face was a customary punishment for a supposed offence against the dignity of the high priest; but in that case it was ordered by the high priest himself, and the fact that it was here done without authority by one of the attendants confirms the opinion that this was not a legal trial before the judicial authority.

(23) **Jesus answered him, if I have spoken evil.**—Comp. Matt. v. 39: the act and words here are a practical illustration of the precept there.

**Bear witness of the evil.**—That is, “Produce the evidence which the law requires.”

(24) **Now Annas had sent him bound . . .**—Better, *Annas therefore sent him bound . . .* The reading is uncertain; some MSS. read “Therefore;” some read “Now;” some omit the word altogether. On the whole, the evidence is in favour of “therefore.” The tense is an aorist, and cannot pro-

him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.<sup>a</sup>

(25) And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him,<sup>b</sup> Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not.

(26) One of the servants of

<sup>a</sup> Matt.  
26. 57.

<sup>b</sup> Matt.  
26. 69.

<sup>c</sup> Matt.  
27. 2.

the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? (27) Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

(28) Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas<sup>c</sup> unto the

perly have a pluperfect force. The rendering of the Authorised version is based upon the opinion that Jesus had before been sent to Caiaphas, and that all which followed from verse 13 (see margin there) had taken place after the close of the investigation before Annas. This view is certainly more probable than that the words "high priest" should be used of Annas and Caiaphas indiscriminately (comp. Note on verse 15), but both do violence to the ordinary meaning of language, and if the interpretation which is adopted in these Notes is correct, neither is necessary.

Jesus was still "bound," as He had been from verse 12.

(25) **And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself.**—Better, *And Simon Peter was standing and warming himself.* (Comp. verse 18.) The words are repeated to draw attention to the fact that he was standing in the court at the time when Jesus was sent from Annas unto Caiaphas, that is, from one wing of the quadrangular building across the court to the other. In Luke xxii. 61 it is said that "the Lord turned and looked upon Peter."

**Art not thou also one of his disciples?**—Comp. Note to verse 17.

(26) **One of the servants of the high priest.**—Comp. Luke xxii. 59.

**Did not I see thee in the garden with him?**—This kinsman of Malchus, who had probably gone with him to the arrest, is not to be silenced by a simple denial. He asks emphatically, "Did not I see thee in the garden with Him?" He feels certain that he is not deceived. The probable interpretation of verse 4 is that Jesus went forth out of the garden towards the band and the officers. If so, the moment when the kinsman saw Peter was previous to that of Malchus' wound. If the kinsman had witnessed this he would almost certainly have charged Peter with it now.

(27) **And immediately the cock crew.**—Better, . . . *a cock crew.* (Comp. Matt. xxvi. 74, and, on the whole question of the denial, verses 69—74.)

(28) On the accusation before Pilate (verses 28—38), comp. the parallels in Matt. xxvii. 11—14; Mark xv. 2—5; Luke xxiii. 2—5.

**The hall of judgment.**—Literally, *the Prætorium.* Comp. Matt. xxvii. 27. It is interesting to observe the various renderings which our translators have given for this one word. Here, "hall of

hall of judgment:<sup>1</sup> and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the pass-over.<sup>2</sup> <sup>(29)</sup> Pilate then went

<sup>1</sup> Or,  
Pilate's  
house.

<sup>2</sup> Acts 19.  
28.

out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? <sup>(30)</sup> They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto

judgment," or "Pilate's house," and "judgment-hall;" verse 33, "hall of judgment" without the marginal alternative; chap. xix. 9, "judgment-hall;" in Matt. xxvii. 27, "common hall," or "governor's house;" in Mark xv. 16, "prætorium" (the original word Anglicised); in Acts xxiv. 10, "judgment-hall;" in Phil. i. 13, "palace," this being perhaps the only passage where "palace" does not give the right meaning.

**And it was early.**—The Greek word occurs in the division of the night in Mark xiii. 35 ("even," "midnight," "cock-crowing," "morning") for the time between cock-crowing and sunrise, as we should say roughly, from three to six o'clock; but comp. Matt. xxvii. 1, and Luke xxii. 66. We must remember that Pilate must have sent the band (verse 3), and was therefore expecting its return.

**And they themselves went not into the judgment hall.**—They sent Jesus in under guard of the Roman band, while they remained outside.

**But that they might eat the passover.**—Comp. *Excursus G: The Day of the Crucifixion of our Lord.*

<sup>(29)</sup> Pilate then went out unto them.—Better, *Pilate therefore went out unto them—i.e., be-*

cause of their religious scruples they woulu not enter into the palace.

**What accusation bring ye against this man?**—Comp. verse 33. They expected that he would have at once ordered His execution; but he asks for the formal charge which they bring against Him. He knew by hearsay what this was, but demands the legal accusation without which the trial could not proceed. As the Roman procurator, he demands what crime Jesus has committed against the Roman law.

<sup>(30)</sup> **If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.**

—They take the position that the Roman is the executive, and their own the judicial power. They bring no legal charge against Jesus, but assert in effect that they themselves, who understood and had investigated the whole matter, had condemned Him to death; and that the fact that they had done so was in itself sufficient proof that He was worthy of death. They use the vague word "malefactor," "evil-doer," though in the trial before Caiaphas they had not sought to prove any evil deed, and they expect that upon this assertion Pilate will pronounce on Him, as on other malefactors, the sentence of death.

thee. <sup>(31)</sup> Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: <sup>(32)</sup> that

*a* Matt.  
20. 19.

*b* Matt.  
27. 11.

the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die. <sup>a</sup> <sup>(33)</sup> Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, <sup>b</sup> and called Jesus, and said unto him,

<sup>(31)</sup> Take ye him, and judge him according to your law.—Pilate takes them at their word. They claim the judicial right; let them exercise it. Their law gave them power to punish, but not the right of capital punishment. If they claim that the matter is wholly within their own power of judgment, then the sentence must also be limited to their own power. He can only execute a sentence which is pronounced by himself after formal trial.

**It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.**—Their words admit that they did not possess the power of life and death, while they imply that they had sentenced Jesus to death. They verbally give up the power, but in reality claim it, and regard the procurator as their executioner. The Jews had lost the power of capital punishment since the time that Archelaus was deposed, and Judæa became a Roman province (A.D. 6 or 7). The Talmud speaks of the loss of this power forty years or more before the destruction of Jerusalem. (Comp. Lightfoot's Note here, and in Matt. xxvi. 3.)

On the stoning of Stephen, which was an illegal act, comp. Acts vii. 57 *et seq.*

<sup>(32)</sup> That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled.—Comp. Note on verse 9.

**Signifying what death he should die.**—Better, *signifying by what manner of death He should die.* (Comp. Note on chap. x. 32.) For the prediction of the manner of death, comp. chaps. iii. 14; xii. 32; and Matt. xx. 19. If the Jews had possessed the power to put Him to death, they would have condemned Him on the technical charge of blasphemy, for which the punishment was stoning. (Comp. chaps. viii. 59; x. 31; and Acts vii. 51 *et seq.*) Crucifixion was not a Jewish punishment, and it was in the fact that He was executed, not by Jewish authority, and on the charge of blasphemy, but by Roman authority, and on a charge of Majestas (high treason), that His own prophecy of the manner of His death was fulfilled.

<sup>(33)</sup> Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus.—Better, *Pilate therefore entered into the Prætorium (or palace) again, and called Jesus.* (Comp. verse 28.) This was practically a private investigation, for the Jews could not enter the palace (verse 28). (Comp. chap. xix. 13.)

**Art thou the King of the Jews?**—Comp. Matt. xxvii. 11; and Luke xxiii. 2, 3. Pilate, of course, knew of the charge brought against Him when he gave permission for the Roman cohort to apprehend Him.

Art thou the King of the Jews? <sup>(34)</sup> Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? <sup>(35)</sup> Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the

chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? <sup>(36)</sup> Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my ser-

<sup>(34)</sup> Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?—The most probable interpretation of the question is that which regards it as establishing a distinction between the title “King of the Jews” as spoken by Pilate and the same title as spoken by Jesus. In the political sense in which Pilate would use it, and in this sense only the claim could be brought against Him in Roman law, He was not King of the Jews. In the theocratic sense in which a Jew would use that title, He was King of the Jews.

<sup>(35)</sup> Pilate answered, Am I a Jew?—His question would say, “You surely do not suppose that I am a Jew?” The procurator’s Roman pride is fired at the very thought. He was the governor of the subject race. What did He know, or care to know, of their subtleties and distinctions?

Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me.—“So far from the question coming from me,” his words mean, “It is *Thine own* nation, and especially the chief priests, who have delivered Thee unto me.” And then, weary of the technicalities with which a Roman trial had nothing to do, he asks the definite question, “What hast Thou done?”

<sup>(36)</sup> Jesus answered, My

kingdom is not of this world.—The answer of Jesus is two-fold, declaring (1) in this verse, that He is not a King in the political sense; and (2) in verse 37, that He is a King in the moral sense. By “of this world” we are to understand that the nature and origin of His kingdom are not of this world, not that His kingdom will not extend in this world. (Comp. chaps. viii. 23 and x. 16.) In the world’s sense of king and kingdom, in the sense in which the Roman empire claimed to rule the world, He had no kingdom.

Then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews.—Better, then would My servants have been fighting. (Comp. chap. xix. 16.) His “servants” are His disciples, who would be in this relation to Him if He were a temporal king, and the crowds such as those who had sought to make Him king (chap. vi. 15), and had filled Jerusalem with the cry, “Hosanna: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel” (chap. xii. 13). One of His servants had drawn the sword (verse 10), and, but that His will had checked the popular feeling, neither the Jewish officers nor the Roman cohort could have delivered Him to be crucified.

But now is my kingdom

vants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.  
<sup>(37)</sup> Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king

then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto

not from hence.—That is, “But, as a matter of fact, My kingdom is not from here.” It was proved by His standing bound in the presence of the procurator. The clause has been strangely pressed into the service of millennial views by interpreting it, “But *now* My kingdom is not from hence. Hereafter it will be.” For the true sense of “now,” comp. chaps. viii. 40; ix. 41; xv. 22, 24.

(37) **Art thou a king then?**—The sentence is both a question and an inference from the word “kingdom” of the previous verse. There is a strong emphasis, and it may be sarcasm, expressed in the pronoun, “Does it not follow then that *Thou* art a king?”

**Thou sayest that I am a king.**—Or, perhaps, *Thou sayest: for I am a king.* (For the phrase “Thou sayest” comp. Matt. xxvi. 25.)

**To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world.**—Better, *Unto this end have I been born, and unto this end am I come unto the world.* Our translators have rendered the same Greek words by different English words “To this end,” “for this cause,” intending probably that the first phrase should be understood of the words which precede, and the second of those which follow: “To this end (that I may be a king) was I born, and for this (that I may bear witness unto the truth)

came I into the world.” Had this been the meaning, it would have been almost certainly expressed by the usual distinction in Greek; and in the absence of any such distinction, the natural interpretation is, “To be king have I been born, and to be a king came I into the world, in order that I may bear witness unto the truth.” The birth and the entrance into the world both refer to the Incarnation, but make emphatic the thought that the birth in time of Him who existed with the Father before all time was the manifestation in the world of Him who came forth from the Father. This thought of “coming into the world” is frequent in St. John. (Comp. especially chaps. x. 36 and xvi. 28.)

**That I should bear witness unto the truth.**—Comp. Note on chaps. i. 8. He has indeed a kingdom, and He came into the world to be a king; but His rule is that of the majesty of Truth, and His kingdom is to be established by His witness of the eternal truth which He had known with His Father, and which He alone could declare to man. (Comp. Notes on chaps. i. 18 and xvi. 13.) He came to be a witness—a martyr—to the truth, and to send forth others to be witnesses and martyrs to the same truth, through the Holy Spirit, who should guide them into all truth. Such was His kingdom; such the power by which it was to

the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. <sup>(38)</sup> Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And

when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at

rule. It was not of this world: it possessed neither land nor treasury, neither senate nor legions, neither consuls nor procurators; but it was to extend its sceptre over all the kingdoms of the earth.

**Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.**—He has spoken of His kingdom. Who are its subjects, and what its power over them? Every one is included who, following the light which God has placed in his soul, comes to "the true Light which lighteth every man;" who, made in the image of God, and with capacities for knowing God, seeks truly to know Him; every one who, in an honest and true heart, is of the truth, and therefore hears the voice of Him who is the Truth. The thought is familiar to us from the earlier chapters of the Gospel. (Comp., e.g., iii. 21; vii. 17; viii. 47; x. 16.)

<sup>(38)</sup> Pilate saith unto him, **What is truth?**—"What is truth?" said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer." Such is Lord Bacon's well-known interpretation of Pilate's well-known question. Others have seen in it the bitterness of a mind that had been tossed to and fro in the troubled sea of contemporaneous thought, and despaired of an anchorage. Others, again, have traced the tone of sarcasm in the governor's words—"Is the son of Roman freedom and Greek thought, which had at this time been welded into one power, to learn truth of a

Jewish enthusiast?" while the older interpreters, for the most part, regarded the question as that of an earnest inquirer desiring to be satisfied. These are a few among the many thoughts the passage has suggested; and yet none of them seem to give the natural impression which follows from the words. Bacon's is nearest to it, but Pilate was far from jesting. He seems rather to have been irritated by the refusal of the Jews to furnish a formal accusation (verse 31), and more so at the question of Jesus in verse 34, and the subtleties, as he thinks them, of verse 36. This seems to him to be another, and at all events it is wholly irrelevant to the question at issue. He has neither time nor will to deal with it, and at once goes from the palace again to the Jews.

**I find in him no fault at all.**—Better, *I find no crime in him*. St. John uses the word rendered "fault" only in this phrase. (Comp. xix. 4, 6.) It is used by St. Matthew (xxvii. 37) for the technical "accusation written, This is Jesus, the King of the Jews," and this seems to be the sense here. "I find no ground for the legal charge (verse 33). Whatever He may be, there is no proof of treason against the majesty of Cæsar."

On the attempt of Pilate to release Jesus (verses 39, 40), comp. Matt. xxvii. 15—23; Mark xv. 6—14; Luke xxiii. 13—23; it is preceded in St. Luke by the trial before Herod (verses 6—12).

all. (39) But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: <sup>a</sup> will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? (40) Then cried they all again, <sup>b</sup> saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

A.D. 33.

<sup>a</sup> Matt.  
27. 15.  
<sup>c</sup> Matt.  
27. 26.

<sup>b</sup> Acts 3.  
14.

CHAPTER XIX.—  
(1) Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.<sup>c</sup> (2) And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, (3) and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. (4) Pilate therefore

(39) At the Passover.—Comp. *Excursus G : The Day of the Crucifixion of our Lord.*

The King of the Jews.—These words are of course said in mockery, but not at Jesus, who was still in the palace. They seem to mean, “This is your king; Such is your national subjection, that He is bound in the Praetorium of the Roman governor. Shall I release Him unto you?”

(40) Then cried they all again.—St. John has not recorded any clamour before, but implies that of Matt. xv. 8, and Luke xxiii. 5—10.

Now Barabbas was a robber.—Comp. Note on chap. x. 1. The word includes the meaning of unrestrained violence, which often leads to bloodshed (comp. Mark xv. 7; Luke xxiii. 19), and is thus used in a striking parallel in Sophocles:—

“And him, so rumour runs, a robber  
bawd  
Of aliens slew.”—

(*Oedipus Rex.* 724.  
Plumptre's Translation.)

There is a solemn emphasis given to the context by the abrupt brevity of the sentence. (Comp. chaps.

xii. 35; xiii. 30; see also Acts iii. 14.)

### XIX.

For the scourging of Jesus and the delivery to be crucified (verse 1—16), comp. generally Notes on Matt. xxvii. 24—30; Mark xv. 15—19; Luke xxiii. 24, 25.

(1) Then Pilate therefore took Jesus.—For the connection, and the force of “therefore” comp. Luke xxiii. 21—23.

(2) For the crown of thorns, comp. Matt. xxvii. 26; and for the purple robe, Matt. xxvii. 28; Mark xv. 17.

(3) And said, Hail, King of the Jews.—The reading of the better MSS. is, *and they kept coming to Him and saying . . .* It is a description of the mock reverence which they paid Him. They kept drawing near and bowing before Him. (Comp. Matt. xxvii. 29.)

They smote him with their hands.—Comp. Note on chap. xviii. 22.

(4) Pilate therefore went forth again.—He had returned to the palace, and had ordered the scourging in the courtyard (Mark

went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. <sup>(5)</sup> Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! <sup>(6)</sup> When the chief priests therefore

and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. <sup>(7)</sup> The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

xv. 15, 16). He now goes forth again with Jesus wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, and hopes by the spectacle to move the sympathy of the people, and to prevent the design of the rulers.

**That ye may know that I find no fault in him.**—Comp. Note on chap. xviii. 38. Had he found proof of a legal crime he would have ordered His execution, and not have led Him forth in this mock royal attitude to move the feelings of the people.

<sup>(5)</sup> **Then came Jesus forth.** The verse describes the scene as the writer remembers it. The figure of the Lord whom he had himself followed and loved, and of whom he thinks as ascended to the throne of the King of kings, led in the cruel mockery of royal garments, was one which left its mark for ever in his mind.

**Behold the man!**—Pilate's "Ecce homo!" is an appeal to the multitude. That picture of suffering—is it not enough? Will none in that throng lift up a cry for mercy, and save Him from the death for which the Sanhedrin are calling?

<sup>(6)</sup> **When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him.**—Comp. chap. xviii. 3. The spectacle, so far from moving their pity, excites their passionate hatred, and they frustrate any other cry which may arise by that of "Crucify Him!" (Comp. Matt. xxvii. 22.)

**Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.**—Comp. Notes on chap. xviii. 31 and 38. "Crucify Him," the words mean, "if you dare to do so; there is no charge on which I can condemn Him; and I will be no party to your act."

<sup>(7)</sup> **We have a law, and by our law he ought to die.**—The better reading is, . . . . and by the law He ought to die. (Comp. Lev. xxiv. 16.) They feel the bitter sarcasm of Pilate's taunt, and appeal to their own law, which, in accordance with the general Roman policy, was in force in all questions which did not directly affect the Government. They change the accusation then from one of treason against Cæsar (verse 33), of which Pilate claimed to be judge, to one of blasphemy against God, of which they only could be judges; and assert that Jesus is by that law

(8) When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid ; (9) and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou ?

guilty of a capital offence, for which He ought to die. (Comp. Matt. xxvi. 63—66, and Luke xxiii. 70.)

(8) When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid.—That is, as the verses which follow show, he was the more afraid because of his wonder who Jesus really was. He must have heard of some of the current impressions as to His life and words; he had himself heard Him claim a kingdom which is not of this world; his wife's dream (Matt. xxvii. 19) had furnished an evil omen which the superstition of the most educated classes of the Roman empire would interpret as a message from the gods; and now he finds that the Jews speak of Him as one who claimed to be the Son of God.

(9) And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus.—He had brought Jesus out to the people. He now led Him back to the palace in order to inquire further of Him in private.

Whence art thou ? — The question is based upon the claim to be Son of God, of which he had heard. He knew that Jesus was a Galilean before sending Him to Herod (Luke xxiii. 6). It is not of His earthly habitation, therefore, that he inquires, but of His origin and nature. (Comp. the same word, and in the same sense, in chap. viii,

But Jesus gave him no answer. (10) Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me ? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power

14, "I know whence I came," and Matt. xxi. 25.)

But Jesus gave him no answer.—This silence of our Lord has seemed hard to understand, and very many and very different have been the explanations suggested. An explanation can only be suggested; it cannot be given with any degree of certainty; but that which seems most in harmony with the position is that Pilate's question was one which to him could not be answered in reality, and therefore was not answered in appearance. The answer had, indeed, already been given (chap. xviii. 37), but he had treated it with the impatience which showed he could not receive it now. As he was not of the truth, he could not hear the voice of the Son of God, and therefore that voice did not speak to him.

(10) Speakest thou not unto me ? — The position of the pronoun in the original is strongly emphatic — "To me dost Thou not speak ?" Pilate is true to the vacillating character which now as man trembles before One who may be a Being from the other world, and now as Roman governor expects that Being to tremble before him.

Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee ? — The text of the better MSS. inverts the order, reading, . . . have power to release Thee, and

to release thee? <sup>(11)</sup> Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto

thee hath the greater sin. <sup>(12)</sup> And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not

*have power to crucify Thee.* This is the more natural order of thought — “Thy life is in my power; yea, and Thy death also.”

<sup>(11)</sup> **Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.** — Pilate had twice said, with something of the pride of his position, “I have power.” Jesus says that he had of himself neither power of life nor power of death, that he had no power against Him but that which was given to him from above. By this is meant, of course, the power which was given to him by God, and the form in which it is expressed (“from above”) has a special force in connection with the question of verse 8, “Whence comest Thou?” That power of which he boasted existed only because He against whom he boasts submitted to it of His own will. “He that cometh from above is above all” (chap. iii. 31). But that power was given to him of God for the carrying out of the Messianic purposes which rendered the death of Jesus necessary. The position of Pilate was that of a half-conscious agent wielding this power. He indeed had sin, for he acted against his own better nature; but not the greater sin, for he did not act against the full light of truth.

**He that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.** — This cannot mean Judas, who is nowhere mentioned in this con-

nexion, and is excluded by the words “unto thee.” Judas delivered our Lord to the Jews. It was the Sanhedrin, and especially Caiaphas, the high priest, who, professing to represent God on earth, had delivered up the Son of God, and had declared that by the law He ought to die. (Comp. chaps. xi. 49; xviii. 14—28).

<sup>(12)</sup> **And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him.** — The words may be interpreted of time, as in the Authorised version, or of cause — “For this reason Pilate sought to release Him.” The latter is more probable, as the reference seems to be to the attempt which he made at once. (Comp. Note on chap. vi. 66.)

**If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar’s friend . . .** — There was another weapon left in the armoury of their devices, against which no Roman governor was proof. The jealous fear of Tiberius had made “treason” a crime, of which the accusation was practically the proof, and the proof was death. The pages of Tacitus and Suetonius abound with examples of ruin wreaked on families in the name of the “law of treason.” (Comp. Merivale: *History of the Romans under the Empire*, vol. v., p. 143 *et seq.*) Here was One who had claimed to be a king, and Pilate was seeking to release Him. They knew, indeed, that it was a claim to be “king” in a sense widely different from any which would

Cæsar's friend : whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.

(13) When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he

brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. (14) And

have affected the empire of Cæsar; but Pilate has refused to condemn Him on the political charge without formal trial, and he has refused to accept their own condemnation of Jesus on the charge of blasphemy. He dare not refuse the force of an appeal which says that he is not Cæsar's friend, and suggests an accusation against himself at Rome. See Note on Matt. xxvii. 2 for the special reasons which would lead Pilate to dread such an accusation.

(13) When Pilate therefore heard that saying.—Better . . . these sayings—i.e., the two sayings of the previous verse.

**He brought Jesus forth . . .**—Comp. verse 9. He hesitates no longer about the course to be taken. His own position and life may be in danger, and he prepares, therefore, to pronounce the final sentence, which must necessarily be done from the public judgment seat outside the palace. (Comp. Matt. xxvii. 19.)

**The Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.** — Both these words occur here only, and are instances of the writer's minute knowledge of the localities in Jerusalem. It may have been better to have preserved the Greek name (*Lithostrotōn*), as well as that by which the place was known in the Hebrew (Syro-Chaldaic) of the time. The word literally means "stone-paved," and was the Greek name for the tessellated "pavement" of marble and coloured stones with which

from the time of Sylla the Romans delighted to adorn the Prætorium. The Chaldee word means "an elevated place," so that the one name was given to it from its form, and the other from the material of which it was made. Suetonius (*Life*, chap. xlvi.) tells us that Julius Cæsar carried about with him such pieces of marble and stone, but the mention of the "place" bears the impression that it was a fixture in front of the Prætorium at Jerusalem, in which the Bema was placed; or it may have been a portion of the northern court of the sanctuary to which Pilate came out, if we identify the Prætorium with the tower Antonia. (Comp. Matt. xxvii. 27.) Josephus mentions that the whole of the Temple mountain was paved with this kind of Mosaic work (*Wars* v. 5, § 2. Caspari, *Chron. Geogr., Introd.*, Eng. Trans., p. 225).

(14) **And it was the preparation of the passover.**—Comp. Matt. xxvii. 52, and *Excursus G: The Day of the Crucifixion of our Lord*, p. 441.

**And about the sixth hour.**—Comp. Matt. xxvii. 45; Mark xv. 25; Luke xxiii. 44. St. John's statement of time (twelve o'clock) seems opposed to that of St. Mark, who states that the Crucifixion took place at "the third hour" (nine o'clock); and no solution of the discrepancy is wholly satisfactory.

There are, as we may have

it was the preparation of  
the passover, and about the

sixth hour : and he saith  
unto the Jews, Behold your

expected, some variations of MSS., and as early as the time of Eusebius we find a suggestion that "third" should be here read for "sixth." No competent critic would, however, for a moment admit that either in the parallel in St. Mark, or in this passage, there is even a strong presumption in favour of any reading except that of the Received text.

The common supposition that St. John adopted the Roman division of hours, and that by "sixth hour" he meant six o'clock is equally unsatisfactory. (Comp. Notes on chaps. i. 39; iv. 6, 52; xi. 9.) Even if it could be proved that this method was in use at the time, the fact would not help us; for if we read this text as meaning six o'clock, it is as much too early for the harmony as twelve o'clock is too late.

It is better, therefore, simply to admit that there is a difficulty arising from our ignorance of the exact order of events, or, it may be, of the exact words which the Evangelists wrote.

Candidly admitting this, and not attempting to explain it away, we may still note:—

(1) That the earlier Gospels all make the darkness last from twelve until three (the sixth hour until the ninth hour). This is apparently intended to indicate the time of the Crucifixion, and they thus agree generally with St. John's account.

(2) That St. John distinguishes between the condemnation to be scourged (verse 1) and that to be crucified. In St. Matthew and St.

Mark the flagellation is regarded as the preliminary and part of the punishment. If it was the third hour at which this commenced—i.e., if the incident of verse 1 of this chapter is to be assigned to nine o'clock—then the Crucifixion itself would naturally come about twelve o'clock.

(3) That St. John is not careful to give the time more than roughly "about the sixth hour." The hours of that day may well be confused, for their sorrow would have made minutes seem as hours, and the sun, which on other days marked the hours, was on that day itself darkened. St. Matthew is equally uncertain at what exact time there was the cry with a loud voice (xxvi. 46), and St. Luke does not give the exact time when the darkness commenced (xxiii. 44).

(4) That the third, sixth, and ninth hours (comp. Matt. xx. 3, 5) seem to have been, in common life, rough divisions of the day, corresponding to the watches of the night. An event occurring at ten o'clock might have been spoken of roughly as about the third hour, while it might, on the other hand, be thought of as within the division called the sixth hour.

(5) That St. John's narrative is that of an eye-witness, relating what he himself saw and remembered.

**Behold your King!**—The words are spoken in bitter irony towards the Jews, as those in the following verse and those written over the cross (verse 19). (Comp. Matt. xxvii. 37.)

King ! <sup>(15)</sup> But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King ? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar.

<sup>(16)</sup> Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified.<sup>a</sup> And they took Jesus, and led him away.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 27. 31.

<sup>(15)</sup> But they cried out . . . — Better, *they cried out therefore . . .* They feel the sting of Pilate's irony, therefore cry the more passionately, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him."

**Shall I crucify your King ?** — In the order of the Greek words "your King" comes emphatically first, "Your King—shall I crucify Him ?" The taunt is uttered in its bitterest form.

**We have no king but Cæsar.** — They are driven by Pilate's taunt, and by their hatred of Jesus, to a denial of their own highest hopes. They who gloried in the Theocracy, and hoped for a temporal Messianic reign, which should free them from Roman bondage; they who boasted that they "were never in bondage to any man" (chap. viii. 33); they who were "chief priests" of the Jews, confess that Cæsar is their only king. The words were doubtless meant, as those in verse 12, to drive Pilate to comply with their wishes, under the dread of an accusation at Rome. They had this effect.

<sup>(16)</sup> Then delivered he him therefore unto them—*i.e.*, to

<sup>(17)</sup> And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called *the place* of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: <sup>(18)</sup> where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

<sup>(19)</sup> And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was,

the chief priests. The Crucifixion was actually carried out by the Roman soldiers, acting under the direction of the chief priests.

**And led him away.** — These words should probably be omitted.

<sup>(27)</sup> For the way of the cross, comp. Matt. xxvii. 31—34; Mark xv. 20—23; Luke xxiii. 26—33. For the present passage, comp. especially the parallel words in Matt. xxvii. 33.

<sup>(18)</sup> Comp. Matt. xxvii. 38; Mark xv. 27; Luke xxiii. 33, 34.

<sup>(19)</sup> Comp. Matt. xxvii. 37; Mark xv. 26; Luke xxiii. 38. St. John speaks of the *title* placed over the cross. This was the common Roman name for an inscription of the kind, which was meant to give information of the crime for which the sentence of crucifixion had been given. St. Matthew calls it the "accusation;" St. Mark, "the superscription of the accusation;" St. Luke, "the superscription." (Comp. chap. xviii. 98.) The inscription varies in word, though not in sense, in each of the narratives; *i.e.*, the Evangelists, in dealing with a written inscription, in which there could have been neither doubt

JESUS OF NAZARETH  
THE KING OF THE  
JEWS. <sup>(20)</sup> This title then  
read many of the Jews :  
for the place where Jesus  
was crucified was nigh to  
the city : and it was written  
in Hebrew, and Greek,

and Latin. <sup>(21)</sup> Then said  
the chief priests of the  
Jews to Pilate, Write not,  
The King of the Jews ;  
but that he said, I am King  
of the Jews. <sup>(22)</sup> Pilate an-  
swered, What I have writ-  
ten I have written.

nor difficulty, have not been careful to give us the exact words. The fact is significant, as bearing upon the literary characteristics of the Gospels, and upon the value which the writers set upon exact accuracy in unimportant details. The reason of the variations may, of course, be traced to the fact that one or more of the accounts may be a translation from the Hebrew inscription.

<sup>(20)</sup> This and the following verses are peculiar to St. John, and furnish another instance of his exact knowledge of what took place at Jerusalem.

**Many of the Jews.**—That is, of the hierarchical party, as generally in this Gospel. (Comp. Note on chap. i. 19.) It has been sometimes understood here of the people generally, because the inscription was written in the three languages; but the last clause of the verse furnishes the reason for the action of the chief priests in the next verse. It would be better to punctuate the verses thus: "This title therefore read many of the Jews, because the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city. And it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Therefore said the chief priests . . ."

**Nigh to the city.**—Comp.  
Matt. xxvii. 33.

**Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.**—"Hebrew," i.e., the current Syro-Chaldaic, was the language of the people generally. The precise form which occurs here is used in the New Testament only by St. John (chaps. v. 2; xix. 13, 17, 20; xx. 16; Rev. x. 11; xvi. 16). "Greek" was the most widely-known language of the time. "Latin" was the official language of the Roman Empire.

<sup>(21)</sup> **Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate.**—Better, *Therefore said . . .* i.e., because the inscription could be read by all comers, and the Messianic title, "King of the Jews," would be exposed to scorn. Yet these are the men who said, in order to accomplish the death of Jesus, "We have no king but Cæsar."

The expression, "chief priests of the Jews," occurs only here in the New Testament, perhaps in contrast to the title, "King of the Jews," to indicate that their anxiety about the title came from them as representatives of the national honour.

**What I have written I have written.**—The words are a common formula to signify that the thing was done and could not be undone. There are frequent instances of similar expressions in the Rabbinical writings.

(23) Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part ;<sup>a</sup> and also *his coat*: now the coat was without seam, woven<sup>1</sup> from the top throughout.

(24) They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be :

<sup>a</sup> Matt.  
27. 35.

<sup>b</sup> Ps. 22.

18.

1 Or,  
*wrought*

<sup>2</sup> Or,  
*Clopas.*

that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots.<sup>b</sup> These things therefore the soldiers did.

(25) Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas,<sup>2</sup> and Mary Magdalene.

(23) On verses 23, 24, comp. Matt. xxvii. 35, 36; Mark xv. 24; Luke xxiii. 34. St. John's account is again more full than any of the others.

And made four parts, to every soldier a part.—The soldiers there who carried the sentence into execution were one of the usual quarternions (Acts xii. 4), under the command of a centurion.

Also his coat: now the coat was without seam.—More exactly, the *tunic*, or *under-garment*. It reached from the neck to the feet, while the outer "garment" was a square rug thrown round the body. Ordinarily the tunic consisted of two pieces connected at the shoulder by clasps; but that worn by Jesus was made in one piece. This seems to have been the rule with the priestly tunics. (Comp. the account of Aaron's tunic in Jos. *Ant.* iii. 7 § 4.)

(24) That the scripture might be fulfilled. — (Comp. Matt. i. 22.

They parted my raiment among them.—The quotation is from Ps. xxii. 18, closely following the Greek translation.

(25) Verses 25—27 relate an incident which is found in St. John only.

Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.—Better, *Mary the (wife) of Clopas*, as in margin. This Clopas is usually identified with Alphæus. (Comp. Matt. x. 3, xxvii. 56.) The question arises, Are there three or four women mentioned here?—i.e., Is "Mary the (wife) of Clopas" sister of Mary the mother of our Lord? or does St. John mean by "His mother's sister" an unnamed woman, who may not improbably be his own mother, Salome, whom he nowhere mentions? The question cannot be answered with certainty; but upon the whole, the balance of evidence inclines to the view that we have four persons here mentioned in two pairs: "His mother and His mother's sister; Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene." As early as the second century, the Peshito Syriac version adopted this view, and inserted "and" after the word *sister*. (Comp. Matt. xxviii. 1 and Luke xxiv. 18, and *Excursus C on The Brethren of the Lord*, p. 432.)

(26) When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son ! (27) Then saith he to

the disciple, Behold thy mother ! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

(28) After this, Jesus knowing that all things

(26) The disciple standing by, whom he loved.—Comp. Note on chap. xiii. 23.

Woman, behold thy son!—Comp. Note on chap. ii. 4. There were those who were called the “brethren of the Lord” who may seem to us to have been of nearer relationship (comp. Matt. xiii. 55), but He regards whosoever doeth the will of His Father which is in heaven, as “brother and sister and mother.” (Comp. Matt. xii. 46 *et seq.*) He now sees standing by the cross her who by His death will be left without son as well as without husband, for the silence of the history can only be accounted for on the supposition that Joseph was already dead; and in the tenderness of His love He commits her to the care of him whom He Himself had loved beyond others, because beyond others he could receive His love.

(27) Behold thy mother!—The solemn committal is a double one. The loving heart of the disciple should find, as well as give, sympathy and support in the love of the mother. The sympathy in their common loss is to be the source of love for each other.

And from that hour.—The words do not necessarily mean, but they certainly may mean, that St. John at once took Mary away from the scene that a mother’s heart could hardly bear; but he is himself present (verse 35), and the

whole account, brief as it is, is that of an eye-witness.

Unto his own home.—Comp. Note on chap. i. 11, and *Introduction*, pp. 1, 6. The word is used in chap. xvi. 32 of the lodging or sojourning place of the Apostles. The meaning here is that whatever was his home became hers.

(28) Comp. accounts of the darkness and death in Matt. xxvii. 45—50; Mark xv. 33—51; Luke xxiii. 44—46.

Knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled.—It is difficult to give the exact meaning of the words in English. In the original the words for “accomplished” and “fulfilled” are derived from the same root, and the latter word is not the ordinary formula of quotation which we have had, *e.g.*, in chap. xiii. 18 (see Note there). The Vulgate has “Postea sciens Jesus quia omnia consummata sunt ut consummaretur Scriptura.” Perhaps the nearest English rendering is “that all things were now completed that the Scripture might be accomplished.” But then there arises the difficult question, Is this connected with the words which follow, or not? The margin assumes that it is, and refers to Ps. lxix. 21. On the other hand (1) St. John’s custom is to quote the fulfilment of Scripture as seen in the event after its occurrence; (2) he

were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 69. 21.

(29) Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon

hyssop, and put it to his mouth. (30) When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

does not here use the ordinary words which accompany such a reference; (3) the actual meaning of "knowing that all things were now accomplished" seems to exclude the idea of a further accomplishment, and to refer to the whole life which was an accomplishment of Scripture; (4) the context of words as they occur in the Psalm (verse 22 *et seq.*) cannot be understood of our Lord. There seems to be good reason, therefore, for understanding the words "that the Scripture might be completed," of the events of the whole life, and not of the words which immediately follow.

I thirst.—He had refused the usual stupefying drink at the moment of crucifixion (comp. Matt. xxvii. 34, 48), but now all has been accomplished, the moment of His departure is at hand, and He seeks relief from the physical agony of the thirst caused by His wounds.

(29) Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar.—This vessel of the ordinary sour wine drunk by the Roman soldiers was placed near in order to be given to those who were crucified. Thirst was always an accompaniment of death by crucifixion, and that the vessel of wine was prepared for this purpose is made probable by the mention of the sponge and

hyssop. (Comp. Matt. xxvii. 28.)

**And put it upon hyssop.**—This detail is peculiar to St. John. Bochart (*Hierozoicon*, i. 2, 50) thinks that the plant was marjoram, or some plant like it, and he is borne out by ancient tradition. The stalks, from a foot to a foot and a half high, would be sufficient to reach to the cross. The plant is named in one other passage in the New Testament (Heb. ix. 29), and is frequent in the Greek of the Old Testament. The Hebrew word is *ēzōv*, and the identification must always be uncertain, because we cannot know whether the Greek translation is based upon an identification of the plant, or upon a similarity in the sound of the names.

(30) **It is finished.**—That is (comp. verse 28, and chap. xvii. 4), the work which God had given Him to do. (Comp. Matt. xxvii. 50, and Luke xxiii. 46.) This word is the expression by Jesus Himself of what St. John had expressed by saying, "Jesus knowing that all things were now finished, that the Scriptures should be fulfilled."

The order of the seven words of the cross will be, (1) "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34); (2) "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise"

(<sup>31</sup>) The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be

broken, and *that* they might be taken away. (<sup>32</sup>) Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. (<sup>33</sup>) But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead

(Luke xxiii. 43); (3) "Woman, behold thy son," "Behold thy mother" (chap. xix. 26, 27); (4) "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" (Matt. xxvii. 46, Mark xv. 34); (5) "I thirst" (verse 28); (6) "It is finished" (verse 29); (7) "Into Thy hands I commend My Spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46).

**And he bowed his head.**—This reminiscence of the very attitude of the last moments is peculiar to St. John.

**And gave up the ghost.**—Comp. chap. x. 18; Matt. xxvii. 50; Mark xv. 37; and Luke xxiii. 46. All the expressions used lay stress on the voluntary action of the death.

(<sup>31</sup>) The account of the piercing of the side (verses 31—37) is peculiar to St. John.

**The preparation, . . . an high day.**—Comp. *Excursus G: The Day of the Crucifixion of our Lord*, p. 441. The Roman custom was to allow the bodies to remain on the cross. To the Jews this was defilement (Deut. xxi. 22, 23), against which they were the more anxious to take precaution because the approaching Sabbath was "an high day."

**That their legs might be broken.**—The breaking of the legs by means of clubs was a Roman punishment, known by the name

of *crurifragium*, which sometimes accompanied crucifixion, and appears also to have been used as a separate punishment. It is not otherwise clear that its purpose was, or that its effect would be, to cause death, but this is the impression we derive from the present context (verse 33).

(<sup>32</sup>) **Then came the soldiers, . . .**—The words do not mean, as they have sometimes been understood, that other soldiers came, but refer to the quaternion before named (verse 23), who had naturally fallen back from the crosses, and are here represented as coming forward to complete their work. The mention of the "first" and the "other" suggests that they formed two pairs, and began on either side breaking the legs of the thieves crucified with Jesus.

(<sup>33</sup>) **And saw that he was dead already, . . .**—The only explanation of their not breaking the legs of Jesus seems to be that the purpose of the *crurifragium* was to ensure death, or, in any case, prevent the possibility of escape. Crucifixion itself would not necessarily cause death for several days, nor, indeed, at all, but Jesus had by His own will committed His spirit to His Father.

already, they brake not his legs : <sup>(34)</sup> but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came

there out blood and water.  
<sup>(35)</sup> And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true : and he knoweth that

<sup>(34)</sup> But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side.

—They had seen that He was dead, and therefore did not break the legs. To cause death was not, then, the object in piercing the side; and yet it may have seemed to make death doubly sure. The word rendered “pierced” occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, but it is certain, from chap. xx. 27, that the act caused a deep wound, and that the point of the lance therefore penetrated to the interior organs of the body. If the soldier stood before the cross, this wound would naturally be in the left side.

**And forthwith came there out blood and water.**—Various physiological explanations have been given of this fact, such as—(1) that the lance pierced the pericardium, which contained a small quantity of watery lymph, which immediately flowed out; and also the heart, from which the blood flowed, the actual death taking place at this moment; (2) that the physical death of Christ resulted from rupture of the heart, and that the cavities of the heart and the surrounding vessels contained a watery fluid; (3) that decomposition of the blood in the corpse had taken place, the solid matter being separated from the fluid, so that it would appear to be blood mixed with water.

Whatever solution we adopt, it is clear that death had taken place some time previously (verse 30), and that, while we cannot say which physical explanation is the

true one, there is within the region of natural occurrences quite sufficient to account for the impression on the mind of St. John which he records here. We have to think of the disciple whom Jesus loved looking at the crucified and pierced body of his Lord, and remembering the picture in later years, and telling that there flowed from that pierced side both blood and water. For the impression made by the fact on St. John’s mind, comp. especially 1 John v. 5, 6.

<sup>(35)</sup> And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true.—Comp. chap. i. 7. It may be better to render the word here, as elsewhere, by “witness,” in order that we may get the full force of its frequent recurrence. The writer speaks of himself in the third person (comp. *Introduction*, p. 15), laying stress upon the specially important fact that it was an eyewitness—“he that saw it”—who testified to the fact, and one who therefore knew it to be true. The word rendered “true” in this clause is the emphatic word for “ideally true,” which is familiar to the readers of this Gospel. (Comp. chap. i. 9.) It answers to the idea of what evidence should be, because it is the evidence of one who himself saw what he witnesses.

**And he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.**—The witness was ideally true, and therefore the things witnessed were actually true. He cannot doubt this, and he testifies

he saith true, that ye might believe. <sup>(36)</sup> For these things were done, that the scrip-

<sup>a</sup> Ex. 12.  
46;  
Num. 9.  
12;  
Ps. 34.  
20.

ture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. <sup>a</sup> <sup>(37)</sup> And again

it in order that others may find in these truths ground for, and the confirmation of, their faith.

<sup>(38)</sup> For these things were done (better, *came to pass*), that the scripture should be fulfilled.—The emphatic witness of the previous verse is not therefore to be confined to the one fact of the flowing of the blood and the water, but to the facts in which the fulfilment of Scripture was accomplished, and which establish the Messiahship of Jesus.

He saw—that which might have seemed an accidental occurrence—that they brake not the legs of Jesus; he saw—that which might have seemed a sort of instinct of the moment—that the Roman soldier pierced the side of Jesus; he saw in the water and blood which flowed from it visible proof that Jesus was the Son of man; but he saw, too, that these incidents were part of the divine destiny of the Messiah which the prophets had foretold, and that in them the Scripture was fulfilled.

**A bone of him shall not be broken.**—The reference is, as the margin gives it, to the Paschal Lamb, in which the Baptist had already seen a type of Christ (comp. Note on chap. i. 29), and which St. Paul afterwards more definitely identifies with Him (1 Cor. v. 7). It is not equally appropriate to refer to Ps. xxxiv. 20, as the thought there is of preservation in life, but the words of the Psalm are doubtless themselves a poetic adaptation of the words of Exodus.

<sup>(37)</sup> They shall look on him whom they pierced.—The words, as they occur in the Authorised version of the prophecy are, “They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced,” but the reading which St. John has followed is that of many MSS., and is adopted by many Rabbinic (as Rashi and Kimchi) and many modern authorities (as Ewald and Geiger). The Greek translation (LXX.) of the prophet avoided the strong word “pierced,” as applied to Jehovah, and substituted for it “insulted.” St. John translates the original Hebrew freely for himself (comp. Rev. i. 7), and gives the undoubted meaning of the Hebrew word, translating it by the same Greek word which is used by Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus. He thinks of the prophecy which spoke of Jehovah as pierced by His people, and sees the fulfilment of it in the Messiah pierced on the cross.

For the fulfilment of the prophecy, comp. Notes on chaps. viii. 28 and xii. 32. Jewish Rabbis, and Greek proselytes, and Roman soldiers alike looked, as they stood before the cross, on Him whom they pierced. That scene is typical. He shall draw all men unto Him, and the moral power over the heart of humanity will be the heart of love, which loves, and therefore saves, him that has pierced it through and through. “God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.”

another scripture saith,  
They shall look on him  
whom they pierced.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Zech.  
12. 10.

<sup>(38)</sup> And after this Joseph of Arimathæa,<sup>b</sup> being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave *him* leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.

<sup>b</sup> Matt.  
27. 57.

<sup>(39)</sup> And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.

<sup>(40)</sup> Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. <sup>(41)</sup> Now in the place where he was cruci-

<sup>(38)</sup> For the burial comp. generally Matt. xxvii. 57—61; Mark xv, 42—47; Luke xxiii. 50—56.

**Joseph of Arimathæa.**—The place is probably the Ramah of 1 Sam. i. 19. Of the person we know only what we read here and in the parallel passages. A legend makes him founder of the Church at Glastonbury.

**But secretly for fear of the Jews.**—This is the only additional fact which St. John supplies with regard to Joseph. He places him in these verses side by side with Nicodemus, and ascribes the same trait of character to both.

<sup>(39)</sup> **Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night.**—He is mentioned only by St. John. (Comp. Notes on chaps. iii. 1, 2, and vii. 50.)

**A mixture of myrrh and aloes.**—For "myrrh," comp. Matt. ii. 11. "Aloes" are not elsewhere mentioned in the New Testament, but they are joined with myrrh in the Messianic Psalm xlv. 8. The aloe is an Eastern odoriferous wood—to be distinguished from the aloes of commerce—and chips of the better kinds are now said to

be worth their weight in gold. The myrrh and aloes were probably pulverised and mixed together, and then placed in the linen in which the body was wrapped.

**About an hundred pound weight.**—Comp. Notes on chap. xii. 3 *et seq.* The quantity is clearly much more than could have been placed in the linen which surrounded the body; but the offering was one of love, and part of it may have been placed in the sepulchre. We read of the burial of Asa, that they "laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries' art" (2 Chron. xvi. 14).

<sup>(40)</sup> **And wound it in linen clothes.**—Comp. Luke xxvi. 12. The same word does not occur there, but the manner of the Jews to bury has been also illustrated in the Note on chap. xi. 44.

<sup>(41)</sup> **There was a garden.**—Comp. chap. xviii. 1. St. John's account makes the choice of the sepulchre depend on its nearness to the place of crucifixion; the account in the earlier Gospels makes it depend on the fact that the sepulchre

fied there was a garden ; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. (42) There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day ; for the

A.D. 33.

<sup>a</sup> Matt.  
28. 1.;  
Mark  
16. 1..

sepulchre was nigh at hand.

## CHAPTER XX.—

(1) The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early,<sup>a</sup> when it was yet

belonged to Joseph. The one account implies the other ; and the burial, under the circumstances, required both that the sepulchre should be at hand, and that its owner should be willing that the body should be placed in it.

**A new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.**—An emphatic combination of the two statements made in Matt. xxvii. 60 and Luke xxiii. 53.

(42) **The Jew's preparation day.**—Comp. verses 14, 31, and *Excursus G: The Day of the Crucifixion of our Lord*, p. 441.

## XX.

[6. The Climax of Faith. Resurrection and Appearances of Jesus (chap. xx.).]

(1) **St. PETER AND ST. JOHN AT THE EMPTY SEPULCHRE. THEY SEE AND BELIEVE** (verses 1—10).

(2) **MARY MAGDALENE AT THE SEPULCHRE. THE ANGELS. "RABONI." CHANGED CONDITIONS OF LIFE** (verses 11—18).

(3) **THE FIRST APPEARANCE TO THE TEN. PEACE TO THEM AND TO THE WORLD** (verses 19—23).

(4) **THE APPEARANCE TO THE**

**ELEVEN. "MY LORD AND MY GOD"** (verses 24—29).

(5) **CLOSE OF THE ORIGINAL GOSPEL AT THIS HIGHEST REACH OF FAITH. ITS OBJECT: LIFE THROUGH BELIEVING** (verses 30, 31).]

(1) For the visit of the women to the sepulchre, and their announcement to the disciples (verses 1, 2), comp. generally Matt. xxviii. 1—4, 8 ; Mark. xvi. 1—4, 8 ; Luke xxiv. 1—3, 9—11. Each of the three narratives separates the return from the visit by an account of the appearance of the angels at the sepulchre.

**The first day of the week.**—The same phrase occurs in Luke xxiv. 1.

**Cometh Mary Magdalene.**—St. Matthew has “Mary Magdalene and the other Mary ;” St. Mark has, “Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome ;” St. Luke has, “The women which had come with Him from Galilee” (xxiii. 55), and enumerates them in xxiv. 10, as “Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and the others with them.” St. John speaks of only one of the group, who was specially prominent.

**And seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.**—This fact is made emphatic in all

dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. <sup>(2)</sup> Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, <sup>a</sup> whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out

<sup>a</sup> ch. 13.  
23, and  
21. 30.

of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. <sup>(3)</sup> Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. <sup>(4)</sup> So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to

the accounts. See especially Luke xxiv. 2.

<sup>(2)</sup> To Simon Peter, and to the other disciple.—St. Matthew has, “to His disciples;” St. Luke has, “to the Eleven, and to all the rest.” St. John relates only that announcement of which he had special personal knowledge.

For “the other disciple” comp. *Introduction*, p. 15. For the connection between St. John and St. Peter comp. *Introduction*, p. 5.

**Whom Jesus loved.**—Comp. Note on chaps. xi. 3; xxi. 15. The word here used of St. John is that which is used of Lazarus in chap. xi. 3. It is not the word which occurs in chaps. xix. 26, xxi. 7, 20.

**We know not where they have laid him.**—The plural has frequently been pressed to prove that Mary included the other women with herself in what she says—*i.e.*, that St. John’s narrative here implies that of the earlier Gospels. This certainly may be so, but we cannot say more than this. It certainly may be that, in her feeling of despair, she speaks generally of the utter hopelessness of human effort, whether her own or that of others. It is the passionate cry of her woman’s heart. They have not only crucified the Lord, but have robbed the body of

the resting-place which love had provided for it, and of the tender care with which love was seeking to surround it—“They have taken away the Lord; and we know not to what fresh indignity their hatred, against which even the grave is not proof, has subjected the body of Him whom we have loved. We know not where they have laid Him.”

<sup>(3)</sup> The details of the visit of Peter and John (verses 3—10) are peculiar to this Gospel. St. Luke mentions the visit of Peter only (xxiv. 12, but comp. verse 23); but here we have the whole scene pictured with all the vividness and exactness of one who stated what he himself saw and took part in.

**Peter therefore went forth, and . . . came to the sepulchre.**—In the original there is a change of tense here; the latter verb expressing the continuance of the journey towards the sepulchre.

<sup>(4)</sup> **So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter.**—This is simply the result of the greater activity of John, who was probably younger than his companion. The thought that love outran doubt or fear, which has often been connected with the words, is not in harmony with the context, for “Peter there-

the sepulchre. <sup>(5)</sup> And he stooping down, *and looking in*, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

<sup>(6)</sup> Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

fore went forth" as soon as he heard Mary's words (verse 3); and Peter it was who first entered into the sepulchre (verse 6).

<sup>(5)</sup> **And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying.**—Better, . . . *seeth the linen clothes lying.* The tense still describes the scene as it actually occurred. The words "looking in" rightly complete the meaning. (Comp. Note on chap. xi. 38, and for the word, Luke xxiv. 12.) It is used again in the New Testament only in verse 11, Jas. i. 25, and 1 Pet. i. 12. It meant, originally, to stoop sideways, and was used, *e.g.*, of a harp-player; then, to stoop over, peer into, inquire into. For the "linen clothes," comp. chap. xix. 40.

**Yet went he not in.**—He is restrained by wonder, not unaccompanied, perhaps, by fear, at what he sees; and waits for his friend and companion.

<sup>(6)</sup> **And went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie.**—Better, . . . *beholdeth the linen clothes lie.* The word is not the same as that in verse 5, but expresses the close observation of the linen clothes by St. Peter, while St. John did but see them from without.

<sup>(7)</sup> **And the napkin, that**

<sup>(7)</sup> **and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.** <sup>(8)</sup> Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and

**was about his head.**—Comp. Note on chap. xi. 44.

**Not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together.** . . . This was not seen from without (verse 5), but was in a separate place, perhaps on the inner side of the sepulchre. In this description and in this verse the minute knowledge and remembrance of an eye-witness reaches its climax. The very fact that the napkin was folded did not escape the writer's eye, nor fade from his memory.

**Then went in also that other disciple . . .**—If the vivid details of this picture impress us with the fact that we are in the presence of an eye-witness, none the less do the traits of character remind us of all that we know from other sources of the actors in the scene. The bold impetuosity of St. Peter, and the gentle reverence of St. John, are represented in him who quickly entered into the sepulchre, and in him who stood gazing into it, and afterwards went in. He went in, "therefore," as the original exactly means, because he heard from Peter of what he had seen.

**And he saw, and believed.**—The gentler character was also the more receptive, and this appears to be intimated in this verse.

believed. <sup>(9)</sup> For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. <sup>(10)</sup> Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

Nothing is said of St. Peter's faith, but St. John seems to unveil for us the inner history of his own spiritual life. The word for "see" is different from either of those used before in verses 5 and 6. It is not that he saw, as from a distance, nor yet that he beheld that which was immediately presented to the gaze; it is not that he saw in any merely physical sense, but that he saw with the eye of the mind, and grasped the truth which lay beneath the phenomena around him. He saw, and he who had believed before, found in this fact the stepping-stone to a higher faith. (Comp. Note on chap. ii. 11.)

<sup>(9)</sup> For as yet they knew not the scripture.—This explains in what sense it was that St. John now believed. Up to this time they knew not the meaning of the Scripture which foretold the Resurrection; but from that moment at least they recognised in the fact of the absent body of Christ the truth that He must rise again. (Comp. Notes on chap. ii. 21, 22.)

That he must rise again from the dead.—Comp. especially Luke xxiv. 26, 44.

<sup>(10)</sup> Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.—The meaning is, of course, "to their lodgings in Jerusalem."

<sup>(11)</sup> But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, <sup>(12)</sup> and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head,

They had accomplished the object of their visit to the sepulchre. One, at least, had realised, and he must have told his thoughts to his friend, that the Lord was not to be looked for in the empty grave, and that Mary's fears (verse 2) were groundless. No enemies had taken the body away. They return, then, with hearts filled with this truth, to ponder over its meaning, or to tell it to others of the Eleven, or to wonder and to wait until He should come again to them, as He had promised.

<sup>(11)</sup> But Mary stood (better, *was standing*) without at the sepulchre weeping.—She had before gone back as soon as she saw that the stone was taken away (verses 1 and 2), and had told the two disciples of what she found. She was left behind by them in their haste to reach the sepulchre, but has followed them; and now that they have returned with the joy of a new and fuller faith, she remains without the sepulchre, not venturing to enter, and giving vent in tears to the sorrow that weighs upon her heart.

She stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre.—Comp. Note on verse 5.

<sup>(12)</sup> And seeth two angels in white sitting.—Comp. generally on the vision of angels, Matt. xxviii. 5—7; Mark. xvi. 5—7;

and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. <sup>(13)</sup> And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou ? She saith unto them, Because they

have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. <sup>(14)</sup> And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and

Luke xxiv. 4—8. This is to be regarded as a distinct vision to Mary, which, from the fulness with which it is recorded, we must suppose that she herself related to the Evangelist. (Comp. *Introduction*, p. 23). It rests, therefore, upon her testimony, and, as a vision to her only, may seem to be less certainly objective than the other appearances. Great caution is, however, necessary in estimating the truth of that which is wholly beyond the application of our ordinary canons of evidence. If we admit the earlier vision of angels, of which there were several witnesses, there can be no reason for rejecting this ; and if the evidence was at the time sufficient to convince the Evangelist, who himself had seen no such vision, but was guided by the Spirit to accept and record this, as seen by Mary, we have a decisive judgment of higher authority than any which criticism can attain.

With the words "in white" we are, of course, to understand raiment. The ellipsis is frequent in the classic, and indeed in all, writers.

**The one at the head, and the other at the feet.**—The idea is apparently that of sitting and watching the body. She had feared that some outrage had been wrought upon the body; but God had given His angels charge concerning Him.

<sup>(13)</sup> **And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou ?**—Comp. Matt. xxviii. 5.

**Because they have taken away my Lord.**—The passionate feeling of verse 2 still has entire possession of her mind. It is now more fervent, for she is not addressing her own friends and the Lord's disciples: "They have taken away *my* Lord, and I know not where they have laid *Him*." (Comp. Note on the plural, "we know not," in verse 2.) She is here alone, speaking to strangers, and may, therefore, have used the singular, whether she went in the early morning with other women or not.

<sup>(14)</sup> **And saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.**—There is no need to imagine an external cause for her turning round, and if there was one it is useless for us to ask what it was. She has expressed her woe, and turns aside again to weep, when she sees another form. Weighed down by her sorrow, not looking intently, it may be, or seeing indistinctly through tear-filled eyes, she does not recognise her Lord. We know not what the appearance was. Figure, feature, clothing there must have been; but these differing, in this as in other manifestations, from those with which they had been familiar. She, perhaps, hardly looked at all, but supposed that the only person

knew not that it was Jesus.

(15) •Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him,

there at that early hour would be the keeper of the garden.

(15) **Sir, if thou have borne him hence . . .**—The word rendered “Sir” is generally a mark of respect, but like the corresponding word in most languages, was also used to a stranger, and even to an inferior. The “gardener,” moreover, corresponded more to what we should call a “bailiff.” He would have been a servant of Joseph of Arimathea, and as such may have become known to Mary at the time of embalming. She says, with emphasis, “If thou hast borne Him hence;” turning away from the angels to address him. The word rendered “borne” here means properly “to bear,” and then “bear away,” “remove,” and then “remove secretly.” (Comp. chap. xii. 6.) Of this last meaning there are many undoubted examples in Josephus, and this seems clearly to be the thought here.

**Tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.**—Three times she refers to the Lord simply by the pronoun “Him.” She has named Him in the previous verse, and perhaps thinks that the gardener had heard those words; but the impression formed from her eager words is that her own mind is so entirely filled with the one subject, that she supposes it to be in the minds of others. The same passionate eagerness is heard in the

Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. (16) Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith

words which follow. Devotion such as hers does not weigh difficulties. A place of safety for that sacred body is the object of her will; and that will neither dreads danger nor sees that the task would be physically impossible, but asserts in the confidence of its own strength, “and I will take Him away.”

(16) **Jesus saith unto her, Mary.**—It is to that devoted love that the first words of the risen Lord are spoken. He who knew her whole past, and knew that her devotion to Him had sprung from the freedom from the thraldom of evil which He had wrought for her, is near to that woman weeping by the grave-side, while Apostles, even the true-hearted Peter and the loving John, have gone to their own homes. The voice of God is always most quickly heard by the hearts that love Him; the presence of God is never so truly felt as in the utter helplessness of human woe.

**Saith unto him, Rabboni;** which is to say, Master.—The better reading is, *saith unto Him in Hebrew, Rabboni . . .*—Comp. Notes on chap. xix. 13, and see Mark x. 51, which is the only other passage in the New Testament where “Rabboni” occurs. She had heard in the well-known voice her own name, and it has brought back to her all the old associations. It is the “Master,” or, as the

unto him, Rabboni ; which is to say, Master. <sup>(17)</sup>Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not ; for I am not yet

ascended to my Father : but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your

Hebrew word means, "*My Master*," and she falls at His feet to embrace Him.

<sup>(17)</sup> Touch me not ; for I am not yet ascended to my Father.—The probable explanation of these words is to be found in the fact that she had cast herself at His feet with the customary reverential embrace of the knees, and perhaps to make doubly sure the fact that it was the Lord's body, and that His words are meant to prevent this. The words themselves must be carefully considered. "Touch" represents a Greek word which means to "cling to," to "fasten on," to "grasp" an object. The tense is present, and the prohibition is, therefore, not of an individual act, but of a continuance of the act, of the habit, "Do not continue clinging to Me." Her act supposed a condition which had not yet been accomplished. He had not returned to earth to abide permanently with His disciples in the presence of the Paraclete (comp. chap. xiv. 8), for He had not yet ascended to the Father. There should come a permanent closeness of union in His presence in the soul ; but then the spirit which her act was manifesting was one which would prevent this presence. The coming of the Paraclete depended upon His going to the Father (comp. chap. xvi. 7), but she would cling to a visible presence, and has not learnt the truth so hard to learn, "It is expedient for you that I go away" (chap. xvi. 7.)

But go to my brethren, and say unto them.—Comp. Matt. xxviii. 19, and chap. xv. 15. There is a special force in the word "brethren" as spoken by the risen Lord, in that it declares the continuance of His human nature. (See Heb. ii. 11.)

I ascend unto my Father, and your Father.—The present is used of the future, which He regards as immediately at hand. The message to the brethren is an assurance that the going to the Father, of which He had so often spoken to them, was about to be realised. The victory over death has been accomplished. This appearance on earth is an earnest of the return to heaven. "Unto My Father," He now says, "and your Father." It is a more emphatic expression than "our Father" would have been. "I ascend unto My Father. Because He is My Father, He is also your Father, and you are My brethren. My victory over death was the victory of man, whose nature has in Me conquered death. My ascension into heaven will be the ascension of human nature, which in Me goes to the Father."

My God, and your God.—This phrase contains the same fulness of meaning, and adds the special thought of the continuity of the human nature of our Lord, which has already appeared in the word "brethren" (See Note above.)

Father; and *to* my God, and your God. <sup>(18)</sup> Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* he had spoken these things unto her.

<sup>a</sup> Mark  
16. 14.

<sup>(19)</sup> Then the same day at evening, <sup>a</sup> being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the

<sup>(18)</sup> **Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples.**—Better, *Mary Magdalene cometh, and announceth to the disciples.* The coming is described from the point of view of the writer, who was one of the disciples.

<sup>(19)</sup> For this appearance to the disciples (verses 19—25) comp. Mark xvi. 14 and Luke xxiv. 36—43. Between the last verse and this we must suppose to occur the bribing of the guard (Matt. xxviii. 11—15), and the conversation on the way to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 13—35; see also Mark xvi. 12, 13.)

**When the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled . . .**—This fact is noted here and in verse 26, and the obvious intention is to point out that the appearance was preternatural. The body of the risen Lord was indeed the body of His human life, but it was not subject to the ordinary conditions of human life. The power that had upheld it as He walked upon the Sea of Galilee (chap. vi. 16—21) made it during those forty days independent of laws of gravitation and of material resistance. (Comp. Luke xxiv. 15, 16, 31, 39.) The supposition that the doors were shut, and were miraculously opened (comp. Acts xii. 46), is opposed to the general impression of the context, and the incident is

one which would probably have been mentioned.

The “fear of the Jews” naturally followed the Crucifixion. The Shepherd was struck and the flock was scattered. They would remember, too, His own words, which foretold persecution for them (chap. xv. 18 *et seq.*), and there may have been definite charges against some of them. Peter, e.g., had drawn upon himself the hostility of the high priest’s household, and John was known to be among the disciples. (Comp. chap. xviii. 8, 25 *et seq.*)

**Peace be unto you.**—The salutation is given also in Luke xxiv. 36. (Comp., in this Gospel, Note on chap. xiv. 27.) The well-known words of greeting would come to them now, as her own name came to Mary (verse 16), bringing, as the familiar tones fell upon the ear, the assurance of the Master’s presence in their midst. But the words would also have the fuller meaning of a message from the spirit-world to them. It is a voice from the darkness beyond the grave into which the living have tried in vain to see, and that voice is one of peace. It is the message of the conqueror of death to man who has conquered in and through Him, declaring that the victory is won. It is the message of at-onement, declaring the peace which

midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. <sup>(20)</sup> And when he had so said, he shewed unto them *his* hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

(21) Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you. <sup>(22)</sup> And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them,

flows from pardoned sin and reconciliation with God to the disciples themselves, and through them, as the apostles of peace, to all mankind.

(20) **He shewed unto them his hands and his side.**—In St. Luke's account (xxiv. 39) we have "hands and feet." The piercing of the side is related by St. John only. (Comp. verses 25—27.)

**Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.**—Better, *the disciples therefore were glad . . .* Their joy arose from the proof of corporeal identity which He had given them in the wounds. Their first impression was that they saw a spirit, and they were afraid, but the conviction that it was indeed the Lord filled them with joy. (Comp. chap. vi. 19—21, and Luke xxiv. 37, 41.)

(21) **Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you.**—These words may be here a solemn repetition of the greeting in verse 19, by which our Lord's own message of peace is immediately connected with that which the Apostles were to deliver to the world. It is, however, more natural to understand the words in verse 19 as those of greeting, and these as words of farewell. (Comp. chap. xiv. 27.) Other words had intervened, as we know from St.

Luke's narrative. He is now about to withdraw the evidence of His presence from them, and does so with the customary "*Shalom*"; but with this He reminds them of the apostleship to which He has called them, gives them an earnest of the Presence which will never leave them, but always qualify them for it (verse 22), and places before them the greatness of the work to which He sends them (verse 23).

**As my (better, *the*) Father hath sent me, even so send I you.**—Comp. Note on chap. xvii. 18, where the words occur in prayer to the Father. As spoken here to the disciples they are the identification of them with Himself in His mediatorial work. He is the great Apostle (Heb. iii. 1); they are ambassadors for Christ, to whom He commits the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. v. 18 *et seq.*). He stands in the same relation to the Father as that in which they stand to Him. He declares to them, and they in His name are to declare to the world, the fulness of the Father's love, and the peace between man and God, witnessed to in His life and death. He and they stand also in the same relation to the world. At this very moment they are assembled with shut doors, for fear of the Jews, who are triumphing over him as

Receive ye the Holy Ghost:  
 (23) Whose soever sins ye  
 remit,<sup>a</sup> they are remitted

<sup>a</sup> Matt.  
18. 18.

unto them ; and whose  
 soever sins ye retain, they  
 are retained.

dead. But to that world, which will hate, persecute, and kill them, as it had hated, persecuted, and killed Him, they are sent as He was sent ; they are to declare forgiveness, mercy, love, peace, as He had declared them, to every heart that does not harden itself against them ; and they are to find in His presence, as He had ever found in the Father's presence, the support which will ever bring peace to their own hearts (chap. xiv. 27).

**And when he had said this, he breathed on them.**—The word rendered “breathed” occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, but was familiar from its use in the Greek (LXX.) of Gen. ii. 7. St. John uses to describe this act of the risen Lord the striking word which had been used to describe the act by which God breathed into man’s nostrils the breath of life. He writes as one who remembered how the influence of that moment on their future lives was a new spiritual creation, by which they were called, as it were, out of death into life. It was the first step in that great moral change which passed over the disciples after the Crucifixion, and of which the day of Pentecost witnessed the accomplishment.

**And saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.**—These words are not, on the one hand, to be understood as simply a promise of the future gift of the Holy Ghost, for they are a definite imperative, referring to the moment when they were spoken ; nor are

they, on the other hand, to be taken as the promised advent of the Paraclete (chap. xiv. 16 *et seq.*), for the gift of the Holy Ghost was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified (chaps. vii. 39, xvi. 7 *et seq.*). The meaning is that He then gave to them a sign, which was itself to faithful hearts as the first-fruits of that which was to come. His act was sacramental, and with the outer and visible sign there was the inward and spiritual grace. The very word used was that used when He said to them “Take (*receive ye*), eat ; this is My body” (Matt. xxvi. 26 ; Mark xiv. 22). It would come to them now with a fulness of sacred meaning. The Risen Body is present with them. The constant spiritual Presence in the person of the Paraclete is promised to them. They again hear the words “Receive ye,” and the very command implies the power to obey. (Comp. *Excursus C: The Sacramental Teaching of St. John’s Gospel*, p. 432.)

(23) **Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them . . .**—Comp. for the “power of the keys,” the Notes on Matt. xvi. 19, and xviii. 18. Assuming what has there been said, it will be sufficient to add that this power is here immediately connected with the representative character of the disciples as Apostles sent by Christ, as He was Himself sent by the Father (verse 21), and that its validity is dependent upon their reception of the Holy Ghost (verse 22), by whom Christ Himself is

(<sup>24</sup>) But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. (<sup>25</sup>) The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said

unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

present in them (chaps. xiv. 18, xvi. 7—11). Sent as He was sent, they are not sent to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved; but in their work, as in His, men are condemned because the light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light.

The ultimate principles upon which this power rests are those stated above—the being sent by Christ, and the reception of the Holy Ghost. God has promised forgiveness wherever there is repentance; He has not promised repentance wherever there is sin. It results from every declaration of forgiveness made in the name of the Father through Jesus Christ, that hearts which in penitence accept it receive remission of their sins; and that the hardness of the hearts which wilfully reject it is by their rejection increased, and the very words by which their sins would be remitted, become the words by which they are retained. (Comp. especially Notes on chap. iii. 17 *et seq.*; xvi. 8 *et seq.*; and 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.)

On individual words in this verse it is important to note that in the better text the tense of that rendered “are remitted” is a strict present, while that rendered “are retained” is in the perfect-present. The difference is not easy to pre-

serve in English, but the thought seems to be, “Whose soever sins ye remit—a change in their condition is taking place—their sins are being remitted by God; whose soever ye retain—their condition remains unchanged—they have been, and are retained.”

(<sup>24</sup>) But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus . . . —Comp. Notes on chaps. xi. 16 and xiv. 5. It is in harmony with the desponding character that looks upon the visit to Jerusalem as necessarily leading to death, that he now is as one who has given up the common hope of the band of disciples, and is not present with them. It has happened as he had thought; the death he had foretold has come to pass. Is this the end of all the Messianic hopes which he had cherished? Is the grave the “whither,” and the cross the “way,” which they knew not?

(<sup>25</sup>) Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails.—This demand for the evidence of his own senses, and refusal to admit the testimony of eye-witnesses, though these were the whole of his ten brethren in the Apostolic band, remind us of the demand made to Christ Himself, “We know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?”

(26) And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said,

Peace *be* unto you. (27) Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be

The reading of the second clause varies between "print of the nails" and "place of the nails." The Greek words vary by only one letter (*τύπος*, "print"; *τόπος*, "place"), so that copyists may easily have taken one for the other. If we read "place," it answers to the touch of the finger, as "print" does to the sight of the eye; but, on the other hand, there is in the repetition an expression of determination, almost, we may say, amounting to obstinacy, which corresponds with the position which Thomas is taking.

**And thrust my hand into his side.**—Comp. verse 29. The feet are not mentioned, but the hands and the side would be demonstrative evidence. We cannot properly infer from this verse that the feet were not nailed.

**I will not believe.**—The determination is expressed in its strongest form by the double Greek negative, "I will by no means believe."

(26) **And after eight days again his disciples were within.**—That is, on the octave of the first appearance to them; as we should now say, on the first Sunday after Easter. There is no reason for thinking that they had not met together during the interval, and that their meeting was a special observance of the Lord's Day. At the same time this appearance on the recurrence of

the first day of the week would take its place among the steps by which the disciples passed from the observance of the Jewish Sabbath to that of the Christian Sunday.

The place is obviously the same as that of the first appearance, and the doors are shut for the same reason. (Comp. Note on verse 20.)

The repetition of the greeting, "Peace be unto you," is partly the natural salutation as He appears to them, but now indeed full of a new meaning, which the thoughts of the week must have written upon their hearts, and partly, it may be, is specially intended to include Thomas, who was not present when it was spoken before.

(27) **Then saith he to Thomas . . .**—This implies a knowledge of the words of verse 25, which in itself would carry conviction to the mind of Thomas. This repetition must have carried with this conviction a sense of shame at his unbelief.

**And be not faithless, but believing.**—Better, *and become not unbelieving, but believing.* The words do not apply to the fact of the Resurrection only, but to the general spiritual condition of the Apostle. He was in danger of passing from the state of a believer in Christ to that of an unbeliever. His demand for the evidence of the senses was a step backward, a resting on the less, not on the more, certain. His Master would have

not faithless, but believing.

(28) And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. (29) Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me,

<sup>a</sup> ch. 21.  
25.

thou hast believed : blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

(30) And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, <sup>a</sup> which

him retrace that step, and become one who rests upon the intuition of the Spirit.

(28) Thomas answered and said unto him.—It is implied that he did not make use of the tests which his Master offered him, but that he at once expressed the fulness of his conviction. This is confirmed by the words of the next verse, “Because thou hast seen Me.”

My Lord and my God.—These words are preceded by “said unto him,” and are followed by “because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed;” and the words “my Lord” can only be referred to Christ. (Comp. verse 13.) The sentence cannot therefore, without violence to the context, be taken as an exclamation addressed to God, and is to be understood in the natural meaning of a confession by the Apostle that his Lord was also God.

(29) Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed.—The name “Thomas” is omitted in all the better MSS., and the order of the other words suggests that they should be read interrogatively—Jesus saith unto him, *Because thou hast seen Me, hast thou believed?* The tense of the word rendered “hast thou believed” is the perfect-present—“hast thou become, and art thou a believer?” The command of verse 27 had done its

work, and the words are words of approval ; but yet they are not wholly so. He had arrived at conviction by means of the senses, but the higher blessedness was that of those who see by the eye of the spirit and not by that of the body ; who base their confidence on the conviction of the faith-faculty, and are independent of the changing phenomena of the senses.

Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.—The truth is expressed in its general form. It is not to be understood in any special sense of the Ten, for the Greek is against this restriction, and as a matter of fact the other disciples also had seen and had believed; but it includes all who have become believers without having seen. This blessedness is thought of as existing from the moment of believing, and the act of faith is therefore spoken of in the past tense. The words look forward to the development of the Church which is to be founded upon Apostolic witness, and whose faith must ever be in the unseen. (Comp. Note on chap. i. 9 and see 1 Pet. i. 9.)

(30) And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples.—More exactly, *Yea, and indeed many and other signs did Jesus.* (Comp. Note on chap. ii. 11.) We must understand the “signs” not of the proofs of the Resurrection only, but of the

are not written in this book: <sup>(31)</sup> but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing

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ye might have life through his name.

## CHAPTER XXI.—

<sup>(1)</sup> After these things Jesus

works wrought during the whole life. The writer's narrative is drawing to a close, and he explains the fact that he has recorded so little of a life which contained so much. There were, indeed, many other signs which he, as an eye-witness, remembered, but which it was not within his purpose to relate.

That he refers to the whole work of Christ, and not to the Risen Life only, is clear, because (1) there were not "many other signs" during the forty days; (2) the words "did Jesus" are not applicable to the manifestation to the disciples; (3) the words "in this book" refer to all that has preceded.

It would seem to follow from this that these verses (30 and 31) are the conclusion of the original Gospel, and that chap. xxi. is to be regarded as a postscript or appendix. We shall find reason for believing that, though an appendix, it proceeded from the hand of the Apostle himself.

<sup>(31)</sup> But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. — We have here the writer's own statement of his object in writing his narrative, and also the explanation of what seems an abrupt end. His object is that those for whom he writes may become believers, and read in these signs the spiritual truths which lay behind them. He has traced step by step the developments of faith in the Apostles themselves, and this

has reached its highest stage in the confession of Thomas. He has recorded the blessedness of those who shall believe without sight, uttered in his Master's words. In the confession of Thomas, and in the comment of our Lord, the object of the author finds its full expression, and with their words the Gospel finds its fitting close. "Become not faithless, but believing;" "My Lord and my God;" "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed"—these are the words the author heard and records. "But these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." This is the object he had in recording them. On the special meaning of these words as connected with the Gnostic heresies of the time, comp. *Introduction*, p. 22.

And that believing ye might have life through his name.—Better, . . . in His name. Thus the last words bring us back again to the first. (Comp. Notes on chap. i. 4, 12.)

## XXI.

[7. The Epilogue to the Gospel. The Link between the Past and the Future (chap. xxi.).]

- (1) THE DRAUGHT OF FISHES (verses 1—8).
- (2) THE BREAKFAST. THE THIRD MANIFESTATION OF JESUS TO THE DISCIPLES (verses 9—14).

shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he *himself*.

(2) There were together

Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the *sons* of Zebedee, and two other of his dis-

(3) THE TEST AND THE COMMISSION. ST. PETER AND ST. JOHN (verses 15—23).

(4) THE CLOSE OF THE GOSPEL. CORROBORATIVE WITNESS TO ITS TRUTH:

(a) By *fellow-disciples* (verse 24);

(b) By *an amanuensis* (verse 25).]

(1) After these things.—Comp. the same expression in chaps. v. 1, vi. 1, and vii. 1. It denotes not immediate succession, but rather an interval during which other events have taken place. Here it connects the events of this chapter with the Gospel which has been brought to a conclusion in chap. xx. 30, 31. At a later period than the last-mentioned there, occurred the events to be mentioned here.

**Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples.**—Better, *He manifested Himself again to the disciples.* The word "Jesus" is of uncertain authority, and has probably been inserted because a Church Lesson began at this place. (Comp. Note on chap. vi. 14.) The pronoun connects the narrative immediately with that which has gone before.

The word rendered "shewed Himself (*manifested Himself*)" is used elsewhere of our Lord's appearance only in Mark xvi. 12, 14, where it is passive, and in verse 14 of this chapter. The argument that this chapter is not the original part of

St. John's Gospel cannot, however, be fairly said to be strengthened by this fact. The word occurs only once besides in the Synoptic Gospels (Mark iv. 32), while it is distinctly a Johannine word (chaps. i. 31; ii. 11; iii. 21; vii. 4; ix. 3; xvii. 6; 1 John i. 2 (twice); ii. 19, 28; iii. 2 (twice), 5, 8; iv. 9; Rev. iii. 18; xv. 4).

The reflective expression, "manifested Himself," is, moreover, in St. John's style. (Comp. chaps. vii. 4, and xi. 33.) The word "again" is another link with what has gone before, connecting this manifestation with that of chap. xx. 19, 26.

**At the sea of Tiberias.**—Comp. Note on chap. vi. 1. The name is found only in St. John.

(2) **There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus.**—It is most probable that we have here the names of all in the group of seven who were Apostles, and that the two unnamed persons were disciples in the wider sense in which the word is often used by St. John (chap. vi. 60, 66; vii. 3; viii. 31; xviii. 19). If they were Andrew and Philip, which has been supposed from chap. i. 40, 43, it is not easy to understand their position in the list, or the absence of their names.

**Thomas** is not named by the other Evangelists, except in the lists of the Apostles. (Comp. chaps. xi. 16; xiv. 5; xx. 24 *et seq.*)

ciples. <sup>(3)</sup> Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught

<sup>1 or</sup>  
*Sirs.*

nothing. <sup>(4)</sup> But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. <sup>(5)</sup> Then Jesus saith unto them, Children,<sup>1</sup> have ye any

**Nathanael** is named only by St. John. (Comp. Notes on chap. i. 45 *et seq.*) He is probably to be identified with the "Bartholomew" of the earlier Gospels; this latter name being a patronymic, like Bar-jona, or Bar-timaeus. (Comp. Matt. x. 3, 4.) The descriptive note "of Cana in Galilee" is added here only.

**The sons of Zebedee.**—This term is not elsewhere given by St. John as a description of himself and his brother, but this is the only place in which he names himself and his brother in a list with others. In St. Luke's account of the earlier draught of fishes, the "sons of Zebedee" are named as partners with "Simon" (chap. v. 10). Their position here agrees with the Johannine authorship of the chapter. In the lists in the other Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, James and John are uniformly prominent in the first group.

**Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing.**—The words are the vivid representation by an ear-witness of what actually took place as they returned to their ordinary work during the interval between the Passover and Pentecost. It does not express either an abandonment of their higher vocation, or an expectation of the presence of the Lord. The picturesque colouring of the whole

scene is quite in St. John's style, as is also the simple co-ordinate arrangement of sentences without connecting particles.

**And that night they caught nothing.**—Comp. for the fact Luke v. 5; but the words are different. The word here rendered "caught" occurs nowhere in the other Gospels, but is found again in this chapter (verse 10), and six times in the earlier chapters of the Gospel (vii. 30, 32, 44; vii. 20; x. 39; xi. 57). It occurs also in Rev. xix. 20.

**Jesus stood on the shore.**—Comp. chap. xx. 19, 26. The words express the sudden appearance without any indication of His coming. He was then standing in the midst, or on the shore, but no one knew whence or how.

**The disciples knew not that it was Jesus.**—Comp. chap. xx. 14.

**Children, have ye any meat?**—The word rendered "Children" (or, as the margin has it, *Sirs*), is used in addressing others only by St. John among the New Testament writers (1 John ii. 14 and 18). It is not the word used in chap. xiii. 33, where we have an expression denoting His affectionate tenderness for the disciples, which would not have been appropriate here, for He does not at once reveal His identity to them.

meat? They answered him, No. <sup>(6)</sup> And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude

of fishes. <sup>(7)</sup> Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat *unto him*, (for he was naked,) and did

It is a word which, indeed, may express His love for them (comp. chap. iv. 49), but which appears also to have been used as an address to workmen or inferiors, not unlike our own words "boys" or "lads." They seem to take it in this sense, as though some traveller passing by asked the question because he wished to purchase some of their fish.

The word rendered "meat" occurs here only in the New Testament. It means anything eaten with bread, and was used as equivalent to the fish which was the ordinary relish. (Comp. Note on chap. vi. 9.)

<sup>(6)</sup> Cast the net on the right side of the ship.—Comp. Luke v. 6. Here the special direction is to cast the net on the right side. We must suppose that the net was cast on the left side, and that they think the speaker who stands on the shore sees some indication of fishes on the other side, for He is still as a stranger to them, and yet they at once obey Him.

They were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.—That is, they were not able to draw it up into the boat. In verse 8 they are described as dragging it to the shore.

<sup>(7)</sup> Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith

unto Peter.—Comp. *Introduction*, p. 15. The traits of character which have before met us are exactly preserved here. John, true to the life of contemplation, is first to trace in the present draught of fishes an analogy with the earlier one, and to discern that the Master who spoke then is present now. Peter, true to the life of action, is first to rush into that Master's presence when he is told that it is the Lord.

**He girt his fisher's coat unto him (for he was naked).**—That is, as the words in the original clearly imply, he put on, and girded round his body the garment which workmen customarily used. This seems to have been a kind of linen frock worn over the shirt, and the Talmud has adopted the Greek word here used to express it. The word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and the rendering "fisher's coat" probably gives a correct idea of what is meant.

The common usage of the Greek and Hebrew words answering to the English word "naked," makes it probable that St. Peter was wearing some under-garment, and that reverence for the Lord, into whose presence he is about to go, led him to add to this the outer frock. (Comp. Acts xix. 12.)

cast himself into the sea.  
<sup>(8)</sup> And the other disciples came in a little ship ; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. <sup>(9)</sup> As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a

fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.  
<sup>(10)</sup> Jesus saith unto them. Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.  
<sup>(11)</sup> Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and

<sup>(8)</sup> **And the other disciples came in a little ship.**—Better, . . . . *in the boat*. The two words “ship” and “boat” (*πλοῖον* and *πλοιάριον*) are interchanged here, as in chap. vi. 17 *et seq.*

For they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits.—That is, about 100 English yards. The shortness of the distance explains how they were able to drag the net in tow. The Greek preposition used with “cubits” (literally, “two hundred cubits off”) is used of distance only by St. John (chap. xi. 18 and Rev. xiv. 20).

**Dragging the net with fishes.**—Comp. Note on verse 6. The Greek is more exactly, . . . . *with the* (literally, *of the*) *fishes*—*i.e.*, those with which the net had been filled (verse 6).

<sup>(9)</sup> **They saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.**—In the original the tenses are present, describing the scene as it was impressed on the mind of the writer. *They saw a fire of coals and fish lying thereon, and bread, or, perhaps, . . . . and a fish lying thereon, and a loaf.*

For “fire of coals” comp. Note on chap. xviii. 18.

For the word rendered “fish,” comp. verses 10 and 13, and Notes

on chap. vi. 9 and 11. In this passage and in verse 13 only it occurs in the singular, but it seems clear that it may be collective, as our word “fish.”

<sup>(10)</sup> **Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.**—Comp. Note on last verse. It is implied that they did so, and thus furnished part of the meal of which they are about to partake.

<sup>(11)</sup> **Simon Peter went up.**—The better reading inserts “therefore”: *Simon Peter therefore went up*—*i.e.*, because of Christ’s command. He went up into the ship now lying on the shore with one end of the net fastened to it, and drew the remainder of the net to the shore.

**Full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three.**—The greatness and the number are dwelt upon because in an ordinary haul of fish a large proportion would be small and valueless, and be cast into the lake again (comp. Matt. xiii. 47 *et seq.*). These were all “great,” and their size and number led to an exact account being taken of them. This would be talked of among the Apostles and their friends and fellow-craftsmen, and is, with the picturesque exactness which is characteristic of St. John, recorded here.

three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

(12) Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine.

We have no clue to any mystical interpretation of this number, and it is probably not intended to convey one. The various meanings which men have read into it, such as that it represents one of every kind of fish known to the natural history of the day; or that one hundred represents the Gentile nations, fifty the Jews, and three the Trinity; or that there is a reference to the 153,600 proselytes of 2 Chron. ii. 17; or that it expresses symbolically the name of Simon Peter, take their place among the eccentricities of exegesis from which even the latest results of criticism are not free. Still, as all the more spiritual interpreters, from St. Augustine downwards, have seen, the differences between this and the earlier miracle (Luke v. 1–11) are too striking to be unintentional. That represents the visible Church, containing good and bad; the net is cast without special direction as to side; the net was broken and many escaped. This represents God's elect, foreknown by Him; all are good; the net is brought to shore, and none are lost. (Comp. the parable of the Draw-net in Matt. xiii. 47–50, and see especially Trench, *Notes on Miracles*, §§ 3 and 33.)

**Yet was not the net broken.**—Comp. Luke v. 6. This is again one of the details which point to an eye-witness as the writer.

(12) Jesus saith unto them,

And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. (13) Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread,

**Come and dine.**—Comp. Note on verse 15 and see Luke xi. 37, which are the only other instances of the verb in the New Testament. The meal referred to was the early morning meal which we call breakfast (verse 4).

**And none of the disciples durst ask him . . .**—Comp. chap. iv. 27. They approach Him in reverent silence. Knowing it is the Lord, they yet desire the assurance in His own words, and still they do not dare to ask, "Who art thou?" The Greek word rendered "ask" means to "prove," "inquire." It is found elsewhere in the New Testament in Matt. ii. 8 and x. 11 only. The word rendered "durst," is also not found again in St. John, but its use in the Gospels is—except in the instance of Nicodemus, "who went in boldly unto Pilate" (Mark xv. 43)—confined to the expression of the reverence which dared not question our Lord. (Comp. Matt. xxii. 46; Mark. xii. 34; Luke xx. 40.) In all these instances it is used with a negative, and with a verb of inquiry, as here.

(13) **Jesus then cometh**—i.e., from the place where they had seen Him to the "fire of coals."

**And taketh bread, and giveth them.**—Better . . . *the bread*—i.e., the bread of verse 9. Again (comp. chap. xx. 22) we are reminded of the words used at the Last Supper. (Comp. Luke xxiv. 30.)

and giveth them, and fish likewise. <sup>(14)</sup> This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

<sup>(15)</sup> So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest

**And fish likewise.**—Better, *and the fish likewise*—*i.e.*, the fishes of verses 9 and 10.

<sup>(14)</sup> **This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples.**—Better, . . . *that Jesus was manifested . . .* Comp. Note on verse 1. The writer is giving his own witness. He passes over, therefore, the appearances to Mary Magdalene and others, and counting only those “to the disciples”—to the Ten on the first Easter day, and to the Eleven on its octave—gives this appearance as the third. (Comp. 1 Cor. xv. 5—7.)

<sup>(15)</sup> **Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas.**—The better text here and in verses 16 and 17, is *Simon, son of John*. The contrast of the name by which the Evangelist denotes, and that by which the Lord addresses Peter, at once strikes us as significant, and the more so because it comes in a context containing several significant verbal contrasts. Our Lord’s words would seem to address him as one who had fallen from the steadfastness of the Rock-man, and had been true rather to his natural than to his apostolic name. (Comp. Note on chap. i. 42, and see Matt. xvi. 17.)

**Lovest thou me more than these?**—*i.e.*, than these disciples who are present here with thee. It seems unnecessary to add this explanation, but not a few English

notes on this verse explain the word “these” of the fishes, or of the boats and nets, as though the question was, “Lovest thou Me more than thy worldly calling? Art thou willing to give up all for Me?” The obvious reference is to Peter’s own comparison of himself with others in the confidence of love which he thought could never fail. (Comp. Matt. xxvi. 33; Mark xiv. 29.)

The thrice-asked question has been generally understood to have special force in the restoration of him who had thrice denied his Lord, and now thrice declares his love for Him, and is thrice entrusted with a work for Him; and we feel that this interpretation gives a natural meaning to the emphasis of these verses. It may not be fanciful to trace significance, even in the external circumstances under which the question was asked. By the side of the lake after casting his net into the sea had Peter first been called to be a fisher of men (Matt. iv. 19). The lake, the very spot on the shore, the nets, the boat, would bring back to his mind in all their fulness the thoughts of the day which had been the turning point of his life. By the side of the “fire of coals” (see Note on chap. xviii. 18, the only other place where the word occurs) he had denied his Lord. As the eye rests upon the “fire of coals” before him, and he is conscious of the

that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

<sup>(16)</sup> He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

<sup>(17)</sup> He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that

presence of the Lord, who knows all things (verse 17), burning thoughts of penitence and shame may well have come to his mind, and these may have been the true preparation for the words which follow.

**Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.** Peter uses a less strong expression for love than that which had been used by our Lord. The question seems to ask, "Dost thou in the full determination of the will, in profound reverence and devotion, love Me?" The answer seems to say, "Thou knowest me; I dare not now declare this fixed determination of the will, but in the fulness of personal affection I dare answer, and Thou knowest that even in my denials it was true, 'I love Thee.'"

**He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.**—More exactly, *little lambs*.

<sup>(16)</sup> **He saith to him again the second time.**—The question is repeated in exactly the same form, except that our Lord does not continue the comparison "more than these." He uses the same word for the higher, more intellectual love; and Peter replies by the same declaration of personal attachment, and the same appeal to his Master's knowledge of him.

**Feed my sheep.**—Better, *be a*

*shepherd of My sheep.* The Vatican and Paris MSS. read "little sheep" here, and in the following verse. (See Note there.)

<sup>(17)</sup> **He saith unto him the third time.**—Again the question is asked, but this time the Lord uses Peter's own word, and His question seems to say, "Dost thou, in personal affection and devotion, really love Me?" The third time, to him who had three times denied! and this time the love which Peter knows has ever filled his soul seems to be doubted. The question cuts to the very quick, and in the agony of the heart smarting beneath the wound, he appeals in more emphatic words than before to the all-seeing eye that could read the very inmost secrets of his life, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee."

**Feed my sheep.**—The better reading is, probably, *little sheep*. The difference is of one letter only (*πρόβατα* and *προβατία*), and a mistake would therefore be easily made by a copyist. The diminutive word occurs nowhere else in Biblical Greek, and is almost certainly, therefore, part of the original text; but whether it was first written here or in verse 16, or in both, must with our present knowledge be left undetermined. The order

I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.  
<sup>(18)</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thy-

self, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird

of the Received text is "lambs" (verse 15), "sheep" (verse 16), "sheep" (verse 17). The Peshito Syriac must have read "lambs," "little sheep," "sheep;" and this is in part supported by the Vulgate, which has "agnos," "agnos," "oves," and more exactly by the Latin of St. Ambrose, who has "agnos," "oviculas," "oves." This would point to a three-fold gradation answering to the three-fold question, and committing to the Apostle's care the lambs, the little sheep, the sheep of the flock of Christ. Still, it must be admitted that the more probable reading is *lambs, little sheep, little sheep*, and that the difference of thought is in the difference of the verbs. "Feed My lambs; be a shepherd to the weak ones of the flock; feed these weak ones." He who loved Christ is to be like Christ, a good shepherd, giving his life for the sheep who are Christ's. He who had been loved and forgiven, held up that he might not fall, restored after he had fallen, is to be to others what Christ had been to him—feeding men with spiritual truths as they can bear them, gently guiding and caring for those who are as the weak ones of the flock through ignorance, prejudice, waywardness. The chief work of the chief Apostle, and of every true apostle of Christ, is to win back the erring, helpless, sinful sons of men; and the power which fits them for this work is the burning love which quickens

all other gifts and graces, and can appeal to the Great Shepherd Himself, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." As a remarkable instance of how the Great Shepherd's words impressed themselves upon the Apostle's mind, comp. 1 Pet. ii. 25.

<sup>(18)</sup> **Verily, verily, I say unto thee.**—This phrase is peculiar to St. John. (Comp. Note on chap. i. 52.) The remainder of the verse contains three pairs of sentences answering to each other:—"Thou wast young,"—"Thou shalt be old;" "Thou girdedst thyself,"—"Thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee;" "And walk-edst whither thou wouldest;"—"And carry thee whither thou wouldest not."

**Thou wast young.**—Literally, *thou wast younger* (than thou art now). Peter must have been at this time (comp. Matt. viii. 14) in middle age.

**Thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee.**—Do these words refer to the crucifixion of Peter? Tradition, from Tertullian downwards (*Scorp.* 15; *De Præscr.* 35), states that he was crucified, and interpreting this prophecy by the event, asserts that they do. Tertullian himself so understood them, for he says, "Then is Peter girded by another when he is bound to the cross."

thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. <sup>(19)</sup> This spake he, signifying by what death he should glo-

rify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. <sup>(20)</sup> Then Peter, turning

But on the other hand, (1) the girding (with chains) would precede, not follow, the crucifixion; (2) it would be more natural to speak of another stretching forth his hands if the nailing them to the cross is intended; (3) the last clause, "carry thee whither thou wouldest not," could not follow the stretching of the hands on the transverse beam of the cross.

It seems impossible therefore to adopt the traditional reference to crucifixion, and we must take the words, "stretch forth thy hands," as expressing symbolically the personal surrender, previous to being girded by another. What the exact form of death should be, the context does not specify. We have thus in the second pair of sentences, as in the first and third, a complete parallelism, the stretching forth of the hands being a part of the girding by another, and the whole being in contrast to "Thou girdedst thyself."

**This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God.**—These words are a comment by the writer, and quite in St. John's style. (Comp. chaps. ii. 21; vi. 6; vii. 29; xii. 33.)

"By what death," or, more exactly, *by what manner of death* (comp. chaps. xii. 33, and xviii. 32), indicates generally the martyrdom of Peter as distinct from a natural death, without special reference to the crucifixion. (See Note on last verse.)

For the phrase "glorify God,"

comp. chap. xiii. 31; xvii. 1; and see also Phil. i. 20; 1 Pet. iv. 16. From its occurrence here in connection with St. Peter, it passed into the common language of the Church for the death of martyrs.

**Follow me.**—It may be, and the next verse makes it probable, that our Lord withdrew from the circle of the disciples, and by some movement or gesture signified to Peter that he should follow Him; but these words must have had for the Apostle a much fuller meaning. By the side of that lake he had first heard the command "Follow Me" (Matt. iv. 19); when sent forth on his apostleship, he had been taught that to follow Christ meant to take up the cross (Matt. x. 38); it was his words which drew from Christ the utterance, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me" (Matt. xvi. 23); to his question at the Last Supper came the answer, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards" (chap. xiii. 36); and now the command has come again with the prophecy of martyrdom, and it must have carried to his mind the thought that he was to follow the Lord in suffering and death itself, and through the dark path which He had trodden was to follow Him to the Father's home.

<sup>(20)</sup> Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following. — We must suppose that St. Peter had retired

about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following;<sup>a</sup> which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which

<sup>a</sup> ch. 13.  
23. and  
20. 2.

is he that betrayeth thee? (21) Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? (22) Jesus saith unto him,

with our Lord, and that St. John seeing this had followed at a distance. He had been the companion and friend of St. Peter (comp. *Introduction*, p. 5). More than any other—and this is made prominent here—he had entered into close communion with the Lord Himself. He was called the “disciple whom Jesus loved” (comp. chap. xx. 2, and *Introduction*, p. 15); he had leaned on His breast at supper, and, at a sign from Peter, had asked who was the traitor; he may well think that for him too there was some glimpse into the future, some declaration of what his path should be; or in that mingling of act and thought, of sign and thing signified, which run all through these verses, his following may indicate that he too, though he had never dared to say so, was ready to follow wherever the Master went.

(21) **Lord, and what shall this man do?**—The motive prompting this question was probably that of loving interest in the future of his friend. It may well be that the two friends, in the sadness of the dark days through which they had passed, had talked together of what their Master’s predictions of the future meant, and had wondered what there was in store for themselves. They knew the world was to hate them as it had hated Him, and they now knew what its hatred for Him was. One of them had learnt that he was to

follow his Lord in death as in life, and he now sees the other following them as they draw apart from the group, and would fain know the future of his friend as he knew his own.

(22) **If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?**—The answer must be taken as reproving the spirit which would inquire into another’s life and work, with the effect of weakening the force of its own. Here, as in all the earlier details of St. Peter’s life, his character is emotional, earnest, loving; but wanting in depth, and not without self-confidence. The words “Follow Me,” the meaning of which he has not missed, may well have led him to thoughts and questions of what that path should be, and the truth may well have sunk into the depth of his heart, there to germinate and burst forth in principle and act. But he is at once taken up with other thoughts. He is told to follow, but is ready to lead. He would know and guide his friend’s life, rather than his own. To him, and to all, there comes the truth that the Father is the husbandman, and it is He who trains every branch of the vine. There is a spiritual companionship which strengthens and helps all who join in it; there is a spiritual guidance which is not without danger to the true strength of him that is led, nor yet to that of him who leads.

The word rendered “tarry” is

If I will that he tarry till  
I come, what *is that* to  
thee? follow thou me.  
<sup>(23)</sup> Then went this saying

abroad among the breth-  
ren, that that disciple  
should not die: yet Jesus  
said not unto him, He

that which we have before had for  
“abide” (see chap. xii. 34, and  
comp. Phil. i. 25 and 1 Cor. xv. 6).  
It is here opposed to “Follow Me”  
(in the martyrdom), and means to  
abide in life.

The phrase, “If I will that he tarry till I come,” is one of those the meaning of which cannot be ascertained with certainty, and to which, therefore, every variety of meaning has been given. We have already seen that the Coming of the Lord was thought of in more than one sense. (Comp. especially Matt. xvi. 28 and xxiv.; and see also in this Gospel, Note on chap. xiv. 3.) The interpretation which has found most support is that which takes the “coming of the Lord” to mean the destruction of Jerusalem, which St. John, and perhaps he only of the Apostles, lived to see. But the context seems to exclude this meaning, for the mistake of verse 23 would surely have been corrected by a reference to the fact that St. John had survived, and wrote the Gospel after, the “coming of the Lord.” The interpretation which the next verse itself suggests is that our Lord made no statement, but expressed a supposition, “If I will,” “If it even be that I will;” and this both gives the exact meaning of the Greek, and corresponds with the remainder of our Lord’s answer. He is directing St. Peter to think of his own future, and not of his friend’s; and He puts a supposition which, even if it were true, would

not make that friend’s life a subject for him then to think of. Had our Lord told him that St. John should remain on earth until His coming, in any sense of the word, then He would have given an answer, which He clearly declined to give.

**Follow thou me.**—The pronoun “thou” is strongly emphatic. “Thy brother’s life is no matter for thy care. Thy work is for thyself to follow Me.”

<sup>(23)</sup> **Then (better, therefore) went this saying abroad among the brethren.**—For the word “brethren” comp. Matt. xxiii. 8 and Acts ix. 30. As a general name for the disciples, it is not elsewhere found in the Gospels, but we have the key to it in our Lord’s own words to Mary Magdalene (chap. xx. 17).

**Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If . . .**—The mistake of the brethren arose from their not attending to the force of the conditional particle. They took as a statement what had been said as a supposition, and understood it in the then current belief that the Second Advent would come in their own generation. (Comp. 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52; and 1 Thess. iv. 17.)

The mistake and its correction are both interesting in their bearing upon the date of the Gospel, and they furnish that kind of evidence which is perfectly natural as a growth, but which cannot possibly be made.

<sup>(1)</sup> The impression that St. John

shall not die ; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ?

(24) This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these

<sup>a</sup> ch. 20.  
30.

things : and we know that his testimony is true.

(25) And there are also many other things which Jesus did,<sup>a</sup> the which, if they should be written

would not die belongs to the period when the Second Advent was looked for as within the limits of lifetime. This period ceased with the first generation of Christians, and the mistake would therefore point to the close of the first century as a limit beyond which the date of the Gospel cannot be placed.

(2) The mistake having been made, the obvious correction after St. John's death would have been simply to record that event. The correction of the text would place these words within his lifetime.

(24) This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things.—Comp. chap. xx. 30, 31. As we have there the formal close of what seems to have been the original Gospel, we have here the formal close of the epilogue. The words are, however, too wide to be limited to the epilogue, and clearly refer to all that has preceded. They identify the writer with the disciple just mentioned, i.e., the disciple whom Jesus loved, and the form of the sentence implies that he who wrote these things was still living, and bearing witness to their truth. He is still testifying to the things of which he wrote.

And we know that his testimony is true.—Our first and natural thought is that these are not the words of the writer of the Gospel, but the additional witness of persons knowing him and testi-

fying to his writing. It is usual to explain the "we know" by referring to 1 John v. 18, 19, 20; but the plural of a letter ought not to be quoted to explain the plural in an historic document, and it is probable that the natural thought is the true one. But though the words are an addition, they are a contemporaneous addition present in every important MS. and version, and an undoubted part of the original text. We cannot tell who are the persons whose words we here read—Andrew it may be, or Philip, or some of the seventy disciples who had been witnesses of the work of Christ, or some of the Ephesian Church, as Aristion or John the Presbyter, who felt that the Apostle's personal character gave the stamp of truth to all he said, and add here the conviction that all these words were true. (Comp. *Introduction*, p. 18.)

(25) And there are also many other things which Jesus did . . . —The MSS. evidence for this verse is also so conclusive that almost every competent editor inserts it in his text, but it is not found in the famous Sinaitic Codex, *prima manu*. The transference from the plural to the singular—"We know" (verse 24), "I suppose" (in this verse)—has led to the supposition, which is in every way probable, that it is the individual testimony of an amanuensis who, from personal knowledge of the

every one, I suppose that even the world itself could

not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

life of Christ, or from knowledge derived from the Apostle John or from others, feels that full beyond all human thought as this Gospel is, it is but a part of the greater fulness. No book could record, no words could tell, what that life was, or what things Jesus did. The disciples saw and believed, and wrote these things that we may believe, and in believing may have life in His name. (Comp. chap. xx. 30, 31).

The word "Amen" is not found

in the better MSS., and is no part of the written text. It is the natural prayer of some copyist, as it is the natural prayer of every devout reader that the writer's purpose may be fulfilled.

The chief MSS. have a subscription appended to the Gospel. "According to John" (Vatican); "Gospel according to John" (Sinaitic [?], Alexandrine, Paris, Basle); "Gospel according to John is ended;" "Gospel according to Luke begins" (Cambridge).

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"*MERCIFUL LORD, we beseech Thee to cast Thy bright beams of light upon Thy Church, that it being enlightened by the doctrine of thy blessed Apostle and Evangelist St. John, may so walk in the light of Thy truth, that it may at length attain to the light of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*"—COLLECT FOR ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST'S DAY (based upon an old form in the Sarum Missal).

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# EXCURSUS ON NOTES TO ST. JOHN

## EXCURSUS A: DOCTRINE OF THE WORD

“Geschrieben steht : ‘Im Anfang war das Wort !’

Hier stock’ ich schon ! Wer hilft mir weiter fort ?

Ich kann das Wort so hoch unmöglich schätzen

Ich muss es anders übersetzen

Wenn ich vom Geiste recht erleuchtet bin.

Geschrieben steht : ‘Im Anfang war der Sinn’

Bedenke wohl die erste Zeile

Dass Deine Feder sich nicht übereile.

Ist es der Sinn, der Alles wirkt und schafft ?

Es sollte stehn : ‘Im Anfang war die Kraft !’

Doch, auch indem ich dieses niederschreibe

Schon warnt mich was, dass ich dabei nicht bleibe,

Mir hilft der Geist ! Auf ein mal seh’ ich Rath

Und schreibe getrost : ‘Im Anfang war die That !’

—Faust von Goethe.

“Tis written : ‘In the beginning was the Word,’

Here am I balked : who now can help afford ?

The Word ?—impossible so high to rate it ;  
And otherwise must I translate it,  
If by the Spirit I am truly taught.

Then thus : ‘In the beginning was the Thought,’

This first line let me weigh completely,  
Lest my impatient pen proceed too fleetly.  
Is it the Thought which works, creates,  
indeed ?

‘In the beginning was the Power.’ I read.  
Yet, as I write, a warning is suggested  
That I the sense may not have fairly tested.

The Spirit aids me ; now I see the light !

‘In the Beginning was the Act,’ I write.”

—Bayard Taylor’s Translation.

THESE well-known lines are quoted here because they forcibly express the difficulty, not to say the impossibility, of fully knowing and fully conveying the sense of the term *Λόγος* (*Logos*), which in our version is rendered “Word.” To understand the meaning of *Logos* is to understand the Gospel according to St. John ; and one of the greatest difficulties which the English reader of St. John has to encounter is that it cannot be translated. Our own English term “Word” was chosen as representing *Verbum*, which is found in all the Latin versions, though in the second century both *Sermo* (discourse) and

*Ratio* (reason) seem to have been in use as renderings. In a Latin translation of Athanasius *de Incarnatione* (1612) the rendering of *Logos* is *Verbum et Ratio*, and this presents the double meaning of the term, which it is of the utmost importance to bear in mind. The nearest English derivative is “Logic,” which is from an adjective derived from *logos* ; and we understand by it, not an art or science which has to do with words, but one which has to do with thought and reason. The Greeks used *logos* in both senses, and Aristotle (*Poster. Anal.* i. 10) found it necessary to distinguish between

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the "logos within" (thought) and the "logos without" (speech). The Stoics introduced the phrase *logos endiathetos* (*verbum mentis*) for "thought," and *logos prophorikos* (*verbum oris*) for "speech": and these phrases were made prominent in the language of theology by Philo Judeus. The term, then, is two-sided, and the English term "Word" not only fails altogether to approach the meaning of the "logos within" (*verbum mentis*), but it also fails to represent the most important part of that side of the meaning which it does approach; for the "logos without" (*verbum oris*) is speech or discourse, rather than the detached "word."

The term *logos* occurs frequently in the New Testament in the sense of utterance; but when used in this sense it differs from the kindred words (*rhemata* and *epos*) in that it always has to do with the living voice. It may mean that which any one said—sc., "discourse," "argument," "doctrine," "narrative," "matter" (about which speech was made); so, on the other hand, it is often used for "reason" (the faculty), "account" (to take and to give), "reckoning," "cause." St. John himself uses the term in this Gospel some thirty-six times in the more general meaning. In the Prologue it is used four times, and in each instance with reference to the person of our Lord. In 1 John i. 1 the phrase "Word of Life" occurs; and in 1 John v. 7 the term "Word" is found absolutely, but this verse is not in any MS. older than the fifteenth century. In Rev. xix. 13 the term "Word of God" is found, and in Heb. iv. 12, 13, the Greek term is found in the sense

"Word of God," and "account" ("with whom we have to do"). But the absolute use of the term *Logos* in a personal sense is confined to the four instances in the Prologue of this Gospel, and it is this special meaning which we have to investigate.

The answers to our inquiry must be sought in the sense attached to the term at the time when, and by the persons among whom, the Gospel was written. In the opening verses of St. John we are at once in the midst of thoughts and terms quite distinct from any with which we are familiar from the earlier Gospels; but they are clearly quite familiar to both the writer and his readers. He uses them without note or comment, and assumes that they convey a known and definite meaning. Now, there are three circles in which we find these thoughts and terms then current:—

(1) We meet with the term *Logos*, expressing a person or personified attribute, in the Gnostic systems which flourished at the commencement of the second century. In Basilides (became prominent about A.D. 125) the *Logos* is the second of the intelligences which were evolved from the Supreme God "Mind first is born of the unborn Father, from it again Reason (*Logos*) is born; then from Reason, Prudence; and from Prudence, Wisdom and Power; and from Wisdom and Power, the Virtues and Princes and Angels—those whom they call 'the first.'" (Irenæus, i., xxiv. 3; Oxford Trans. p. 72.)

In Valentinus, who seems to have been a Christian in earlier life (prominent A.D. 140—160), we meet with a more complicated develop-

ment. The first principle is *Proarche*, or First Beginning: *Propator*, or First Father, *Bythos*, or the Deep. He is eternal and unbegotten, and existed in repose through boundless ages. With Him there existed the Thought (*Ennoia*) of His mind, who is also called Grace and Silence. When *Bythos* willed to put forth from Himself the beginning of all things, Thought conceived and brought forth Understanding (*Nous*) and Truth. Understanding was also called Only-begotten and Father, and was the principle of the whole *Pleroma*. The Understanding produced Reason (*Logos*) and Life, and from this pair was produced the Man and the Church. These four pairs—Deep (*Bythos*) and Thought (*Ennoia*), Understanding (*Nous*) and Truth (*Aletheia*), Reason (*Logos*) and Life (*Zoë*), Man (*Anthropos*) and Church (*Ecclesia*), form the first octave or *ogdoad*. From *Logos* and *Zoë*, proceeded five pairs, which made the *decad*; and from *Anthropos* and *Ecclesia* six pairs, which made the *dodecad*. These together constituted the thirty æons. There was also an unwedded æon called *Horos* (Boundary), or *Stauros* (Cross), who proceeded from *Bythos* and *Ennoia*, and whose office it was to keep every existence in its proper place (Irenæus, i. 1; Oxford Trans. p. 3 *et seq.*). In all this, and in the names of other æons, as *Comforter*, *Faith*, *Hope*, *Love*, we have, so far as terms and expressions go, much that may remind us of the teaching of St. John. But it is the product of a mind acquainted with Christianity, and blending it with other systems.

(2) We meet with the doctrine of the Word also in the circle of Jewish thoughts. Traces of it are

found, indeed, in the poetry of the Old Testament itself. (Comp. Pss. xxxiii. 4, 6; cvii. 20; cxix. 89, 105; cxlvii. 15, 18; Isa. xl. 8; lv. 10, 11; Jer. xxiii. 29.) We find also that the Wisdom of God is personified, as in Job xxviii. 12 *et seq.* and Prov. viii. and ix. In the Apocryphal Books, *Ecclesiasticus* and *The Wisdom of Solomon*, this personification becomes more definite. See Eccl. i. 1, 4; xxiv. 9—21, and Wisd. vi. 22—ix., and note especially, ix. 1, 2, where “Thy word” and “Thy wisdom” are parallels; ix. 4, “wisdom, that sitteth by Thy throne;” xvi. 12, “Thy word, O Lord, which healeth all things;” xviii. 15, “Thine almighty word leaped down from heaven out of Thy royal throne.” Any inference which we draw from these books must, however, be checked by the fact that they belong to the border-land between Hebrew and Greek thought, and that while the Book of Wisdom cannot belong to an earlier date than the middle of the second century B.C., it may belong to the first century A.D., and was even ascribed to Philo himself, as we know from St. Jerome.

We have foreshadowings of the personal Word which are more distinctly Jewish in the Targums,\*

\* Targum means *translation* or *interpretation*. The word was technically given to the Chaldee paraphrases of the Old Testament, which sprung up after the Captivity, when the mass of the people had lost the knowledge of the older Hebrew. At first these Targums were oral, and writing them was prohibited. When written Targums first came into existence is unknown. Zunz and others think there were written Targums on several books of the Old Testament as early as the time of the Maccabees. (Comp. Article “Targum,” in Kitto’s *Biblical Cyclopædia*, vol. iii. p. 948 *et seq.*)

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where the *Memra da-Yeya* (Word of the Lord) becomes almost a synonym of the divine name. "By Myself have I sworn" (Gen. xxii. 16) becomes "By My Word have I sworn." In Gen. xvi. Hagar sees the "Word of the Lord" and afterwards identifies Him with the "Shekinah." So we read that the *Word of the Lord* was with Ishmael, with Abraham, with Isaac, with Joseph. Jacob's vow (Gen. xxviii. 20) is thus read in the Targum of Oukelos, "If the *Memra da-Yeya* will be my help, and will keep me in that way in which I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to wear, and bring me again in peace to my father's house, then *Memra da-Yeya* shall be my God." The Jerusalem Targum reads *Memra da-Yeya* for the Angel-Jehovah in the revelation to Moses (Ex. iii. 14). In Isa. lxiii. 7—10, the Targum of Jonathan reads the *Memra* for the Angel, the Redeemer, and Jehovah; and in Mal. iii. identifies the Coming One with the Angel of the Covenant, and the *Memra* of the Lord. Dr. Etheridge noted in the Targum of Oukelos, in the Pentateuch only, more than 150 places in which the *Memra da-Yeya* is spoken of. In the later Targums it is still more frequent.

(3) Another region of thought in which we find analogies to the doctrine of the Word, is the Judæo-Alexandrine philosophy, which is represented by Philo. A Jew by birth, and descended from a priestly family, Philo was some thirty years old at the commencement of the Christian era. From the study of the Old Testament he passed to that of Plato and Pythagoras, and with such devotion that there was a common proverb, "Either Plato philonises, or Philo platonises." He

drank not less deeply of the spirit of other teachers, and in the allegorical interpretation of the Essenes, the Cabbalists, and the Therapeutæ, he found the mean between the Hebrew tradition of his youth and the Greek freedom of thought with which he became familiar in later years. The dualism of the Greek philosophers and the Biblical account of creation were both rejected for the Eastern theory of emanation. He thought of God as Eternal Light, from Whom all light comes; whose radiance cannot be gazed upon by human eyes, but which was reflected in the *Word*, or, as the Scripture calls it, Divine Wisdom. This he conceived to be not a mere abstraction, but an emanation, a real existence, and a person. He calls Him, for example, the "first begotten of God," "the Archangel," and, adopting the language of the Stoics (comp. p. 423), the *Logos Endiathetos*. From this proceeded a second emanation, the *Logos Prophorikos* which manifests the *Logos Endiathetos*, and is Himself manifested by the Universe. The *Logos* is, then, in the conception of Philo, the link between the Universe and God, between objective matter and the spiritual Light which man cannot approach. On the spiritual side, the *Logos* is spoken of in terms which make it not seldom doubtful whether the thought is of a person or of an idea; on the material side, the *Logos* is the active reason and energy, and sometimes seems to be almost identified with the Universe itself. The bridge passes imperceptibly into the territory on either side.

Such are, in a few words, the systems of thought, which stand in relation more or less appreciable to

the Johannine doctrine of the Word. The question is, from which, if indeed from any one of these, was the *form* of St. John's teaching derived?

The Gnostic systems are excluded if our conclusion as to the authorship and date of the Gospel is valid. (Comp. *Introduction*, pp. 8, 18 *et seq.*) They are also excluded by independent comparison with the Gospel, and thus they afford a confirmation of that conclusion. They are in the relation of the complex to the simple, the development to the germ. Any one who will carefully read the extract from Irenæus which is given above will find good reason for believing that he is describing a system which may naturally enough have been developed from St. John; but from which the doctrine of St. John could not have been developed. The one is as the stream flowing in all its clearness from the fountain; the other is as the same stream lower in its course, made turbid by the admixture of human thoughts.

There remains the Judæo-Alexandrine philosophy, of which Philo is the leading representative, and the Hebrew thoughts expressed in the Old Testament paraphrases, and in the developments of later Judaism. We are to bear in mind, however, that the line between these cannot be drawn with such clearness and certainty as men generally seem to suppose. The Chaldaean paraphrases contain an Eastern element with which the nation was imbued during its long captivity, and Philo himself borrowed much from Oriental modes of thought. He was, moreover, a Jew, and the Jewish Scriptures and these very Targums were the

foundation of his mental training. His philosophy is avowedly based upon the Old Testament. We are to bear in mind also when we speak of the philosophy of Philo that no philosopher arises without a cause, or lives without an effect. Philo represents a great current of thought which influenced himself and his generation, and which he deepened and widened. Of that current Alexandria and Ephesus were the two great centres, the former specially representing Judaism in contact with the freer thought of Greece, and the latter specially representing Judaism in contact with the theosophies of Asia, but both meeting and permeating each other in these great cities. (Comp. *Introduction* p. 18.)

We have to think, then, of St. John as trained in the knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures and the paraphrases which explained them, and accustomed from childhood to hear of the *Memra da-Yeya*, the Word of the Lord, as the representative of God to man. Through the teaching of the Baptist he is led to the Christ, and during the whole of Christ's ministry, learns the truth that He only had seen the Father, and was the Apostle of God to the world. After Christ's death the Resurrection strengthens every conviction and removes every doubt. The presence of the Spirit at Pentecost brings back the words He had given them as a revelation from God, and quickens the soul with the inspiration which gives the power to understand them. Then the Apostle goes forth to his work as a witness of what he had seen and heard, and for half a century fulfils this work. Then he writes what he so many times had told of Christ's words and

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Christ's works. He is living in the midst of men round whom and in whom that current of Judæo-Alexandrine thought has been flowing for two generations. He hears men talking of the Beginning, of Logos, of Life, of Light, of Pleroma, of Shekinah, of Only-Begotten, of Grace, of Truth; and he prefixes to his Gospel a short preface which declares to them that all these thoughts of theirs were but shadows of the true. There was a Being from all eternity face to face with God, and that Being was the true Logos, and He was not only with God, but was God. By Him did the universe come into existence. In Him was Life and the Light of men—the true ideal Light which lighteth every man. And not only was that Logos truly God, but He was truly man; the Incarnation was the answer to the problem which their systems of thought had vainly tried to fathom. The Logos, on the spiritual side, from eternity God; on the material side, in time, become flesh: this was the answer which Philo had dimly forecast. He was the Shekinah tabernacled among men, manifesting the glory of the Only-Begotten. In Him was the Pleroma. By Jesus Christ came Grace and Truth. No man had ever seen the brightness of the glory of the presence of God, but the Only-

Begotten was the true Interpreter, declaring the Fatherhood of God to man.

Such is the Johannine doctrine of the Word. Shaping itself, as it must have done, if it was to be understood at Ephesus at the close of the first century, in the then current forms of thought, and in the then current terms, it expresses in all its fulness the great truth of the Incarnation. It has bridged for ever the gulf between God and man in the person of One who is both God and man; and this union was possible because there is in man a "logos within"—reason, thought, conscience; — because there is in the spiritual nature of man that which is capable of communion with God.

[This subject is dealt with in the works mentioned in the *Introduction*, and in a very convenient form in Liddon's *Bampton Lectures* and Westcott's *Introduction*. Lücke's treatment of it (Ed. 3, vol. i. p. 249 *et seq.*) is one of the most valuable parts of his invaluable Commentary. See also Dorner, *Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, vol. i., especially Dr. Simon's Appendix, p. 327 *et seq.*, Eng. Trans.; Mansel's article "Philosophy," in Kitto's *Biblical Encyclopædia*, vol. iii. p. 520 *et seq.*; Etheridge, *Translations of the Targums on the Pentateuch*, p. 14 *et seq.*]

## EXCURSUS B: SOME VARIATIONS IN THE TEXT OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL

It has often been found necessary in the preceding Notes to refer to readings differing from the Received text, on which our Authorised version is based. To justify or discuss these in any degree of ful-

neness would be beyond the scope of the present volume; but it may be of interest, as well as of importance, to give, in two or three typical cases, an outline of the method by which the results are obtained.

**Chap. i. 18.**—The Authorised Version reads here, “*the only begotten Son*,” and the Received text, upon which it is based, has ὁ μονογενὴς υἱός. But soon after the middle of the second century we find the reading μονογενὴς Θεός—“only begotten God”—which has at least an equal, if not a superior, claim to be considered the original text.

The external evidence, judged by the testimony of MSS., of versions, and of quotations in extant works, must be admitted to be in favour of the reading, “only begotten God.”

Of the chief uncial MSS., the Sinaitic, the Vatican, and the Codex Ephraem at Paris, support it; while against it are the Alexandrian MS. now in the British Museum, and a reading of Codex Ephraem from the hand of a later scribe. The preponderance in weight is, however, much greater than it seems to be numerically.

Of the Versions the Revised Syriac (Peshito), the margin of the Philoxenian Syriac, the *Aethiopic* (?), read “only begotten God.” All the Latin versions, the Curetonian, Philoxenian (not the margin) and Jerusalem Syriac, the Georgian, Slavonic, Armenian, Arabic, and Anglo-Saxon read “the only begotten Son.” The Revised Syriac must here be regarded as having special weight from the fact that its evidence agrees with that of MSS. from which it usually differs.

Of the Fathers “only begotten God” is read certainly by Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Epiphanius, Didymus *de Trinitate*, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Cyril of Alexandria. “The only begotten Son” is read by Eusebius, Athanasius, Chrysostom, Theodore of Mop-

suestia, and by the Latin writers from Tertullian downwards. The uncertain text of many of the Fathers makes their witness doubtful; but this at least seems clear, that the decided weight of Patristic evidence is in favour of “only begotten God.” Tregelles lays stress upon the fact that Arius adopted this reading, but it must be observed that Arius very likely considered “God,” as here used, in a secondary sense; and so might have regarded the passage as latently, though not on the surface, favouring his own views.

The external evidence being thus in favour of “only begotten God,” we have to inquire whether there is any sufficient ground on which it can be set aside. We are at once met by the fact that the term is unique, and therefore, it is often said, not likely to occur; whereas “the only begotten Son” is perfectly natural, and occurs in St. John in chap. iii. 16, 18, and 1 John iv. 19. But we are to remember that what is unnatural to us would have been so to copyists and translators; and the fact that we have an unusual term strongly supported by external evidence is of weight just in proportion as the term is unusual. Nor need a unique term be a matter of suspicion in this Prologue, where we have found so much that is not paralleled in other parts of the New Testament. (Comp. *Excursus A.*)

It has been sometimes thought that “only begotten Son” may have been changed into “only begotten God” from a dogmatic bias. We have seen that Only Begotten (*Monogenes*) was one of the æons in the Ogdoad of Valentinus (p. 424); but there was the greatest care to separate the æons from the

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original Lythos, and no copyist in the Valentinian interest would have applied the term "God" to the "Only Begotten." Unique as the term was, and unknown to Christian orthodoxy, no copyist, on the other hand, would have ventured to adopt it in the interest of Christianity.

*A priori* reasons would seem, then, to unite with external evidence in favour of the unfamiliar reading, "only begotten God." We find it beyond all question soon after the middle of the second century. It is almost impossible to believe that it was of set purpose, and quite impossible to believe that it was by accident, read instead of "only begotten Son," and the only alternative is that it is part of the original Gospel. The doubtful word was probably written, with the usual contraction, in the uncial characters, ΘC (ΘEOC), and this was read by copyists as the more familiar TIC (TIOC); and thus by the change of a single letter and the addition of the article, "only begotten God," passed into "the only begotten Son," and the original text passed into an oblivion from which it has never been rescued.

But although the term "only begotten God" is unfamiliar to us, it is not foreign to the thought of the Prologue, the very central idea of which is that the Logos was with God, and was God. The eternal Sonship of the Logos is expressed in the parallel sentence "in the bosom of the Father," and in this term "only begotten God" the Prologue repeats emphatically at its conclusion the text with which it opened: "In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God." The omission of the article gives the sentence a meaning

which it is difficult to express in translation, but which in Greek makes the term "only begotten God" an assertion—"No man hath seen God at any time; only begotten God as He is, He who is in the bosom of the Father, *He* hath declared Him."

[Comp. for fuller information on this important reading, Professor Abbot's articles in the *Andover Bibliotheca Sacra* (Oct., 1861), and *Unitarian Review* (June, 1875), and Professor Drummond in *Theological Review* (Oct., 1871). There is an elaborate and careful note based on Professor Abbot's article in Alford's *Commentary, in loco*. He decides for the Received text, which is followed also by Wordsworth (but without any note on the reading), Tischendorf, and Scrivener. Tregelles, on the other hand, reads "only begotten God," which is also adopted by Westcott and Hort. The remarkable *Dissertation* upon it, read before the University of Cambridge by Dr. Hort in 1876, will perhaps turn the current of thoughtful opinion in favour of the reading he advocates.]

**Chap. vii. 53—viii. 12.**—This section illustrates a critical question of a wholly different nature. We have in the Received text no less than twelve verses which, by the admission of all competent authorities, have no valid claim to be considered part of the Gospel according to St. John. They are found in no Greek MS. earlier than the sixth century; they are not an original part of any of the oldest versions; they are not quoted as by St. John before the last half of the fourth century.

The external evidence leaves, therefore, no room for doubt that they are an interpolation, and as we

have seen in the Notes upon the passages, this is entirely borne out by the matter and style of the verses themselves, and by the break which they cause in the narrative. At the same time they leave the impression, which becomes more vivid on every fresh study of the section, that they are a genuine record of an incident in the life and teaching of Christ. It would have been impossible for any writer in the early Church to have risen so far above the ordinary feeling upon such a question; and their whole tone is that of the words of Christ, and not of the words of man.

But if they are the words of Christ, and yet not part of the Fourth Gospel, how did they come to be inserted in this place? We must remember, as this Gospel itself reminds us, that we have no complete record of the works and words of Christ, and that there must have been many incidents treasured in the memory of the first disciples which have not come down to us. (Comp. Acts xx. 35.) We know from Eusebius that many such incidents were narrated in the five books of Papias, who thus gives his own purpose and plan:—"I shall not regret to subjoin to my interpretations also, for your benefit, whatsoever I have at any time accurately ascertained and treasured up in my memory, as I have received it from the elders, and have recorded it in order to give additional confirmation to the truth by my testimony. For I have never, like many, delighted to hear those that tell many things, but those that teach the truth; neither those that record foreign precepts, but those that are given from the Lord to our faith, and that came from the truth itself.

But if I met with any one who had been a follower of the elders anywhere, I made it a point to inquire what were the declarations of the elders; what was said by Andrew, Peter, or Philip; what by Thomas, James, John, Matthew, or any other of the disciples of our Lord; what was said by Aristion and by the presbyter John, disciples of the Lord; for I do not think that I derived so much benefit from books as from the living voice of those that are still surviving" (Euseb. *Eccles. Hist.* iii., xxxix.; Bagster's Trans., p. 142). At the end of the same chapter Eusebius says, "He also gives another history, *of a woman who had been accused of many sins before the Lord.*" The reference is almost certainly to the incident in the present paragraph, and in it we have the probable key to the insertion here. A copyist would write the section from Papias in the margin of his MS., perhaps, as Ewald suggests, to illustrate the statement, "Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man" (chap. viii. 14); and from the margin it found its way, as other such passages did, into the Cambridge and other MSS. Adopted from the margin, it would be placed in the text where there was space for it on the page of the MS., and this would account for the fact that it is found in different positions; for it is placed by one MS. after chap. vii. 36; by several at the end of the Gospel; by four important cursives at the end of Luke xxi. The copyists felt, then, that it was an incident which should have a place in their MSS., but they felt free to decide that place at their own discretion.

Augustine held that the passage had been omitted on the ground of

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the supposed encouragement it gave to lax views, and this position has been maintained by others in ancient and modern times. It does not, however, account (1) for the fact that chap. vii. 53 is part of the doubtful passage; (2) the great variations of place and of readings in the MSS. where it is found; (3) the internal differences of matter and style.

[Comp. Scrivener's *New Testament Criticism*, Ed. 2, p. 530 *et seq.*; Alford's note *in loco*, in which he incorporates the results of Lücke's full discussion; Lightfoot, in *Contemporary Review*, Oct., 1875.]

**Chap. xviii. 1.**—This is a variation of another kind, and one of little practical importance, except that the Received text has furnished ground for one of the instances quoted in proof of the position that the writer was not a Jew of Palestine. It is of interest as illustrating the way in which various-readings have arisen.

Our Authorised version has “the brook Cedron,” departing from the Received text, which has the article in the plural, and must be rendered “the brook (or, more exactly, *the winter-torrent*) of the cedars.” The article is, however, in the singular in the Alexandrian MS., which supports the Authorised version, and this reading is adopted by Griesbach, Scholz, Lachmann, and Meyer. The Sinaitic and Cambridge MSS. have both the article and the substantive in the singular—“the brook Cedrus, or “the brook of the cedar”—and this is the reading adopted by Tischendorf (Ed. 8). The Vatican MS., and a later correction of the Sinaitic MS., read with the Received text “the brook of the cedars,” and this is

the reading adopted by Alford, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort.

It must be allowed that this reading, “the brook of the cedars,” has most external support. But against it is the fact that both the other texts agree in reading the singular article. The probable explanation is that the original text was *τὸν κέδρων* (the Kedron)—*i.e.*, the Hebrew name of the torrent (*Kidrón*), meaning “black” or “dark,” was written in Greek letters. But this termination of the substantive would seem to a Greek copyist like a genitive plural (*κέδρων*), for the uncial MSS. would have no accents, and he would make the article agree with it, reading *τῶν κέδρων* (“of the cedars”). Another copyist would do just the opposite, changing the number of the substantive to agree with the article, and reading *τὸν κέδρου* (“of the Cedrus,” or “of the cedar”). In this way the reading of the Alexandrian MS., which is adopted in the Authorised version, explains, on the one hand, how that of the Sinaitic and Cambridge MSS., and, on the other hand, how that of the Vatican MS., would arise; and being the only one of the three which explains the others, it probably represents the original text.

There is in any case no foundation for the argument that the writer was unacquainted with Hebrew, for even if the true reading be “of the cedars” (*τῶν κέδρων*) a Jew may have chosen it to represent the Hebrew word from its similarity in sound. It is remarkable that in the LXX. translation of 2 Sam. xv. 23 the word occurs twice (once in the Hebrew and English), *i.e.*, as an appellative and as a proper name. Comp. 1 Kings xv. 13 (LXX.).

## EXCURSUS C: THE BRETHREN OF THE LORD

In four passages of this Gospel we read of persons who are described as our Lord's "brethren":—

"After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples:" (chap. ii. 12).

"His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judæa. . . .

For neither did his brethren believe on him. . . .

But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast . . . (chap. vii. 3, 5, 10).

In a fifth passage (chap. xx. 17) our Lord uses the term "my brethren," but it is clearly in a spiritual sense, with reference to the disciples (verse 18).

In the earlier gospels we not only find a group of persons spoken of as "brethren" and "sisters" (Matt. xii. 46—50; xiii. 55; Mark iii. 31—35; vi. 3; Luke viii.; 19—21); but the names of the brethren are given:—

"Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?" (Matt. xiii. 55, 56). Comp. the parallel in Mark vi. 3.)

The "brethren" are referred to again in Acts i. 14, in close connection with "Mary the mother of Jesus"; and "James the Lord's brother" is mentioned in Gal. i. 19.

There were persons, then, known during our Lord's human life and in the generation which followed as his "brethren" and "sisters"; and it is quite clear that they were closely connected with Him by some natural relation: but we pass from

clearness to the haze of doubt and controversy, the moment we attempt to ascertain what that natural relation was. Within our present limits little space can be given to a question which after all is not of primary importance, and belongs moreover to notes on other parts of the New Testament rather than to those on St. John's Gospel, and to which with our present knowledge no decisive answer can be given. The answers which have been given are briefly as follow:—

(1) That the relation was one of full brotherhood; *i.e.*, that the "brethren" and "sisters" were children of Joseph and Mary. This, of course meets the requirement that a natural sense should be given to the terms to be interpreted; and its strength is in the difficulty of believing that the terms would be used incidentally, as they are, without a word of explanation, in any but their most obvious meaning. This view meets us at a very early date. It was held almost certainly by *Tertullian* (*adv. Marc.* iv. 19; *de Carn. Christ.* 7) — though his general position is less in harmony with it than with either of the other views — and was naturally adopted by the anti-ascetic sects. But while it gives a simple sense to the term "brethren," it is not without grave difficulties:—

(i.) The argument from silence must not be unduly pressed, but it is significant that in neither of the genealogies of our Lord is there any reference to other children of Mary (Matt. i. 18; Luke iii. 23), nor does any one of the evangelists give the shadow of a hint that such children were born. Taking all the circumstances into account, is it an

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undue pressing of the *argumentum ex silentio* to give it very considerable weight here?

(ii.) The evident position of superiority assumed by the "brethren" in this Gospel (chap. vii. 3—10) seems difficult to understand if they were younger than our Lord; and if we bear in mind the rights of the Jewish first-born.

(iii.) It is still more difficult to understand how Mary could have been committed by our Lord to the care of the beloved disciple, and how she could have gone to his house as her future home (chap. xix. 26, 27), if she had sons and daughters of her own flesh who would have been her natural guardians. Other women stood with her at the cross, her sister among them. Could daughters as well as sons have deserted her? The "brethren" are found with her, be it remembered, immediately after the Ascension (Acts i. 14).

(2) That the relation was in no natural sense one of brotherhood, but that the brethren were cousins, children of Mary the wife of Clopas, who is assumed to be identical with the sister of the mother of our Lord (John xix. 25; comp. Note on the passage). Historically this answer owes its origin to the feeling that some answer other than that which we have been considering *must* be found. The growth of monasticism in the fourth century, had hardened the pious feeling of the ever-virginity of the mother of our Lord into a dogma which had to be supported at any cost. Helvidius had attacked the current ascetic spirit, and claimed in support of his position the example of Mary, as being the mother of children subsequent to the birth of our Lord.

This called forth the famous reply of Jerome, "*Adv. Helvidium de Perpetua Virginitate B. Mariæ*," in which he put forth the view that the brethren were cousins, and thus sought to establish the "virginity of Joseph as well as that of Mary." It is quite natural that this view should have proved attractive to many minds, and have become the most widely accepted, as it satisfies an almost universal feeling. It may not unfairly be called the doctrine of the Western Church. But we should remember that it is not found in any writer previous to Jerome; that he himself claims no earlier authority for it, and avowedly is contending as an advocate, not deciding as a judge; that the work in which he puts it forth belongs to his youth (*circ. 383*); and that in his later writings he did not consistently hold it.

This view is met by the obvious objection which to the present writer seems absolutely fatal. No amount of ingenious explanation of the term "brethren" will do away with what seems to him the manifest meaning of the passages in which it occurs—a group of persons belonging to the household of Joseph and Mary, and connected with our Lord by some real relation of brotherhood. Did the solution rest between this and the previous answer, *i.e.*, between a natural sense of the *ipsissima verba* of holy Scripture and an *à priori* feeling of fitness, the view of Tertullian in the second century must be held, rather than that of Jerome in the fourth. It need hardly be hinted that even natural feeling on this question may lead towards the earlier view, if we bear in mind the relation of the humanity of our Lord to the whole human nature—fatherhood,

motherhood, brotherhood—which is in Him made holy.

(3) But it does not seem necessary to adopt either of the previous views. An answer has been given which preserves the natural sense of the word "brethren," and yet does not deny the ever-virginity of Mary—*i.e.*, it meets the feeling which lies at the foundation of the second answer, and, like the first, does no violence to the words of Scripture. It understands by "brethren" children of Joseph by a former wife, who would, therefore, be members of the household, and would, perhaps naturally, be placed in a position of antagonism to the Son of Mary. Nor is it unnatural that our Lord should have commended His mother to him who, more than any other, was a spiritual brother and son, rather than to men who were not her own children, and, up to the resurrection, did not believe in her Divine Son. (Comp. chaps. vii. 5 and xix. 27, Notes.)

This view agrees with what is implied in chap. xix. 27, and perhaps in Mark vi. 3, that Joseph was already dead. We have no authority for the common opinion as to his extreme age earlier than the Protevangelium of St. James, an apocryphal gospel of the second century; but the silence of the narrative makes it at least probable that he was not living at the commencement of the ministry.

No inference can fairly be drawn from the phrase "first-born son" in Luke ii. 7; and Matt. i. 25, where it is not contained in the better text. The words "until she brought forth" refer to the time preceding,

not to that following, the birth of Jesus.

The second view has been so prominently asserted as the interpretation of the Christian Church, and especially of the Fathers, that it may be well to note that this third opinion was the one almost universally held before the time of Jerome, and that it is practically the opinion of the Greek Church. In favour of it, rather than of the second, may be quoted among the earliest versions the Curetonian and Peshito Syriac, and the Thebaic; it is probably adopted in the Clementine Homilies, and Apostolic Constitutions. Among the Fathers who held it are Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, Hilary of Poitiers, Gregory of Nyssa, Epiphanius, Ambrose, Cyril of Alexandria. On the ground of authority, therefore, as well as of reason, it is here adopted as the most probable answer to a question in which more than probability cannot be expected.

[In a question for which little space can here be found, it is specially satisfactory to be able to refer to easily accessible works where fuller information may be sought. In support of the first answer the reader may consult Alford's Note on Matt. xiii. 55. A learned argument in favour of the second is given in Dr. W. H. Mill's *On the Mythical Interpretation of the Gospels*, pp. 219—274. See also Professor Plumptre's Note on Matt. xii. 46. The third view is adopted by Professor Lightfoot in his *Commentary on Galatians*, pp. 245—282, after a full review of all the authorities, to which this note is largely indebted.]

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### EXCURSUS D: THE SACRAMENTAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL

The Fourth Gospel contains no record of the institution of Holy Baptism or of the Eucharist. This will not surprise us if we remember that it belonged to a generation later than the journeys and letters of St. Paul, in which we find that both sacraments had become part of the regular life of the Church. That which was constant and undoubted, and was part of the gospel wherever it was proclaimed, and in the formularies of which the very words of institution were preserved, needed not to be told again. But that which is not told is assumed. Like the Transfiguration, the Agony in Gethsemane, the Ascension, both Sacraments are more than recorded; they are interwoven in the very texture of the Gospel. The discourse with Nicodemus in chap. iii. and the discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum in chap. vi. could not have been written at the close of the first century without being understood by the writer, and without being intended to be understood by the readers, as discourses on Holy Baptism and the Eucharist. In the Notes on these chapters an attempt has been made to bring out their true meaning in detail, and to these the reader is referred. Nor are we concerned here with the controversies which in after ages have gathered round these centres. All that can be attempted is to point out that the differences of opinion with regard to the general interpretation of the chapters as a whole have arisen from reading them with preconceived convictions as to their meaning, and from confounding things which ought to be dis-

tinguished. It may be granted that no one who heard the discourse at Capernaum could understand it of the solemn institution, which was still in the future, and then wholly outside any possibility of current thought; but it does not follow that the discourse was not intended to teach the doctrine of the Eucharist, and to be interpreted in the events and words of the Last Supper. It takes its place among the many things which the disciples afterwards remembered that He had said unto them, and believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said. (Comp. Note on chap. ii. 22.) The conclusion that the words have no reference to the Eucharist would require the statement, not that the disciples could not understand them at the time, but that Jesus Himself did not; and no one who is prepared to admit that to Him the future was as the present, and that when He said, "I am the Bread of Life," "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you," He knew that He would also take bread and break it, and say, "This is My body, which is given for you; this do in remembrance of Me;" and would take the cup, and say, "This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you," can doubt that He taught in word at the one Passover that which He taught in act and word at the other. It may be granted, again, that when St. John heard, with or from Nicodemus, of the new birth which was of water and of the Spirit, he may have asked, as the teacher of Israel did, "How

can these things be?" but the statement that the discourse does not apply to the sacrament of Baptism is inconsistent with the commission to the Apostles to baptise all nations, and the fact that the day of Pentecost and the history of the Apostolic Church must have brought to the writer's mind in all its fulness, what the meaning of the spiritual birth was. It may be granted that these truths, as they were revealed by Jesus Christ, were beyond the comprehension of any who heard them, and that the teaching of these chapters is inconsistent with the degree of faith and spiritual receptivity which even at the end of our Lord's ministry is found in the circle of the Apostles; but we are to remember once more that the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is in this very Gospel itself promised to guide them into all truth, and that in the person of him who records the promise there is the evidence that it had been fulfilled.

We have seen in chap. xx. 22, 23, how the Apostle thinks of the act of breathing on the disciples, with which Jesus accompanied the

gift of the Holy Ghost and the power to remit sins, as itself a sacramental sign; and throughout the Gospel we have seen how he regards every work of Jesus as a sign of a spiritual reality beyond. The whole Gospel is, so to speak, sacramental. The Word became flesh, and the whole life in the flesh was a manifestation which the physical eye could look upon and the physical ear could hear, that by means of these senses the human spirit might perceive the nature of the Eternal Spirit in whose image it was made. The spiritual was manifested in material form, that in it the spiritual nature of man embodied in material form may have communion with God. Every word and work was "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," and at the time when the Apostle wrote, two of these signs were specially regarded by the Church as those "ordained by Christ himself as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." (Comp. Matt. xxvi. 26—29; xxviii. 19; Mark xiv. 22—25; Luke xxii. 19, 20; Acts ii. 46; 1 Cor. xi.)

#### EXCURSUS E : THE DISCOURSES IN ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL

No difficulty with regard to this Gospel has been more strongly felt by those who accept the authenticity, or more cogently urged by those who reject it, than the way in which the discourses of our Lord as they are recorded in the Fourth Gospel differ from the shorter detached sayings and parables with which we are familiar in the Synoptists. "*Il faut faire un choix;*" says M. Rénan, "*si Jésus parlait comme le veut Matthieu, il n'a pu*

*parler comme le veut Jean.*" This is not all; for not only are these discourses of Jesus unlike those of the earlier Gospels, but the Fourth Gospel preserves unity of style, whether Jesus is speaking, or John the Baptist, or the writer himself. Further, while this style widely differs from that of the earlier Gospels, it very clearly resembles that of the First Epistle of St. John.

This difference must, to a large extent, be at once admitted by every

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candid inquirer; but M. Rénan's inference will not follow unless the difference is so great that it cannot be accounted for. It may be assumed here that the arguments of the *Introduction* have led the reader to think that the Johannine Authorship of the Gospel is, at least, in the highest degree probable. The writer claims, as we have seen (p. 14), to be an eye-witness and to have seen and heard that which he records, and others give their sanction to the claim. It follows, therefore, even if all that has been said about these discourses and their difference from those of the Synoptists can be established, that we have nothing more than a difficulty which our ignorance cannot explain; but this cannot weigh against the position which, on so many other grounds, has been established. But is the difference—great as it undoubtedly is—wholly inexplicable, or, indeed, greater than under all the circumstances we have a right to expect?

(1) It must be remembered, in the first place, that the ground common to the Fourth Gospel and the earlier three, is much greater than it is often supposed to be. The following parallels are given that the reader may conveniently estimate it. The texts may be found quoted in parallel columns in Godet and Luthardt; and the weight of their cumulative testimony can be felt only by one who will carefully compare them.

Chap. ii. 19 ;	Matt. xxvi. 61, xxvii. 40; Mark xiv. 58; xvi. 29.
— iii. 18 ;	Mark xvi. 16.
— iv. 44 ,	Matt. xiii. 57 ; Mark vi. 4.
— v. 8 ;	Matt. ix. 6 ; Mark ii. 9; Luke v. 24.

Chap. vi. 20 ;	Matt. xiv. 27 ; Mark i. 50.
— — 35 ;	Matt. v. 6 ; Luke i. 21.
— — 37 ;	Matt. xi. 28, 29.
— — 46 ;	Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22.
— — xii. 7 ,	Matt. xxvi. 12 ; Mark xiv. 8.
— — 8 ;	Matt. xxvi. 11 ; Mark xiv. 7.
— — 25 ;	Matt. x. 39, and xvi. 25 ; Mark viii. 35 ; Luke ix. 14.
— — 27 ;	Matt. xxvi. 38 ; Mark xiv. 24.
— — xiii. 3 ;	Matt. xi. 27.
— — 16, and xv. 20 ;	Matt. x. 24 ; Luke vi. 40.
— — 20 ;	Matt. x. 40 ; Luke x. 16.
— — 21 ;	Matt. xxvi. 21 ; Mark xiv. 18.
— — 38 ;	Matt. xxvi. 34 ; Mark xiv. 30 ; Luke xxii. 34.
— — xiv. 18 ;	Matt. xxviii. 20.
— — 28 ;	Mark xiii. 32.
— — 31 ;	Matt. xxvi. 46.
— — xv. 21 ;	Matt. x. 22.
— — xvi. 32 ;	Matt. xxvi. 31 ; Mark xiv. 27.
— — xvii. 2 ;	Matt. xxviii. 18.
— — xviii. 11 ;	Matt. xxvi. 55.
— — — 17 ;	Matt. xxvii. 11 ; Mark xv. 2 ; Luke xxiii. 3.
— — xx. 23 ;	Matt. xvi. 19, and xviii. 18.

The passages in Matt. xi. 25—27 and xv. 13 and Luke x. 22 should be specially noticed, as containing thoughts like those which meet us in St. John.

(2) If we accept the common belief that our Lord spoke in the current Syro-Chaldaic, then the discourses of the Greek Gospels are

translations, and a translator's own style naturally impresses itself upon his work.

(3) The scene of the Fourth Gospel is, for the most part, Jerusalem; that of the Synoptists is Galilee. In the one case our Lord is chiefly addressing scribes and Pharisees, Rabbis and elders; in the other case He is chiefly addressing the multitudes of Galilee, peasants and fishermen, who flocked to hear Him. It is true that one of the most striking of the discourses of the Fourth Gospel was delivered in the synagogue at Capernaum (chap. vi. 59), but in this discourse it is the hierarchical party ("the Jews," see Note on chap. i. 19) who murmur at Him, and it is to them that the discourse is chiefly addressed. Is the difference in the discourses greater than that between the University sermon of a distinguished teacher, and the address delivered in a village church or in the open air by the same man?

(4) We possess no part of the teaching of Christ in full. The Fourth Gospel does not profess to be more than an historical *r  sum  *, a fragment of a great whole, which could not possibly be produced (chaps. xx. 30, 31; xxi. 24, 25). We read it in detached portions, and think of it as representing the teaching of the ministerial life of Christ; but we seldom realise that the whole of the teaching which we have, would have occupied but a few hours in delivery, whilst it is set in an historical framework which extends over months and years. Now, in making a summary of the discourses of Christ, nothing is more natural than that each writer should have chosen such portions as fell in with the bent of his own mind, the depth of his own perception, and

the special object in writing which he himself had in view. And as nothing is more natural, so nothing can be more providential, than that the teaching of Christ should be thus preserved as it presented itself to minds of widely-differing types, who are representatives of the differing thoughts and culture of every age. From this it results that the peasant and the fisherman, the scribe and the scholar, in all places and in all times, alike find in the doctrine of Christ the truth that satisfies the soul.

(5) The unity of style in the whole of the Fourth Gospel, and the similarity between that of the Gospel and that of the First Epistle, must be evident to every thoughtful reader. It does not follow that this style is wholly St. John's. Surely we may believe rather that the loving and beloved disciple, who in closest intimacy drank of his Master's spirit and listened to His words, caught in some degree the very form in which that Master spoke. The difficulty felt as to the unity of style is in truth an argument of no small weight in favour of the authenticity. No criticism has been able to dismember this Gospel, and assign part to one writer and part to another. It stands or falls as a whole, and the conviction which comes from the study of individual parts applies therefore to every part. The unity of style with that of the Epistle enables us to add the independent testimony which we have for the Epistle, to the general testimony in favour of the Gospel.

(6) Still it is impossible to deny that there is a subjective element in the discourses recorded in the Fourth Gospel: they cannot have been stored in the mind of the

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beloved disciple for fifty years without bearing the impress of that mind. He cannot have written in Ephesus at the close of the first century without being influenced by the current of thought in the midst of which he lived; and the purpose with which the Gospel was written (see *Introduction*, p. 20 *et seq.*) must have moulded the form which it took. But is it therefore the less authentic? Does it the less produce the exact teaching of Christ? To answer these questions in the affirmative is to forget that the author, like other holy men of old, was inspired of God; to forget that the man was inspired, not the form or the word; to forget that presence of the Paraclete which was, as this very Gospel emphatically declares, "to teach all things, and bring all things to remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you," and "to guide into all truth."

It is not, then, necessary to make our choice between St. Matthew

and St. John, or to believe that the Gospel is not the "Gospel of Jesus Christ" because it is "the Gospel according to St. John." Rather, it is necessary to study the works and words of Christ as each Evangelist, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has recorded them, and in each part to seek to catch something of the fulness of that life which no record can convey; and as the experience of men in all ages has proved, there is no part in which that life is so fully presented as in the discourses related by St. John.

[Comp. Westcott, *Introduction*, p. 281 *et seq.*; Sanday, *Authorship and Historical Character of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 69 *et seq.*; Godet, *Introduction*, pp. 163—205; Lüthardt, *St. John the Author of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 224—244; and especially the comparison between the Sermon on the Mount and the Teaching in the Fourth Gospel, appended to Professor Maurice's *Discourses*, pp. 488—492.]

### EXCURSUS F: THE OMISSION OF THE RAISING OF LAZARUS IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

This omission has so often been made a difficulty, and to many minds is perhaps so real a difficulty, that a few words may be added upon it, though the Notes have already indicated what is probably the true solution. (Comp. especially Notes on chap. xi. 8—16.) If, as there is every reason to believe, the Gospel according to St. Mark represents the original document on which the Synoptic Gospels are founded; and if St. Mark is also the interpreter of St. Peter, who wrote whatsoever he recorded with great accuracy (*Euseb. Eccles. Hist.* iii. 39), then the absence of

St. Peter from the body of disciples who journeyed to Bethany with our Lord would be a sufficient reason why this miracle was not included in the Synoptic tradition, and why it is therefore not recorded in any one of the earlier Gospels.

No stress can be laid upon the common explanation that silence was imposed upon the Evangelists who wrote during the lifetime of the sisters or of Lazarus himself. There is no such reticence in the case of the young man at Nain, or of the daughter of Jairus; and the feeling forces itself upon the mind that such an explanation owes its

existence to the necessity which has been felt to explain the difficulty somehow. This necessity has been felt, perhaps, too strongly. To us the miracle seems to stand alone as an exercise of power which every one who knew of it must have regarded as we regard it, and which no record of the life and works of Christ could omit. But the miracle differs essentially from others only in the fulness of our knowledge of it, and the circumstances which attended it. Each Evangelist does record a miracle of raising from the dead, and St. Luke records two. They are not dwelt upon as in any way beyond the limits of the miraculous power of Christ, which every Evangelist fully sets forth. All Jews, indeed, had expected such power to accompany the Messianic reign; they knew from their Scriptures that it had been vouchsafed to Elijah; they record (Matt. xi. 5; Luke vii. 22), without any comment, the answer to the Baptist, "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, *the dead are raised up*, and the poor have the gospel preached to them;" and St. Luke records also in the Acts that the power of life and death was committed to the Apostles. The common feeling is shown in this very narrative, where the Jews ask, "Could not this Man which opened the eyes of the blind have caused that even this man should not have died?" (xi. 37.)

Stress may with greater confidence be laid upon the fact that the miracle at Bethany does not fall in the local sphere of the Synoptic narratives, but that it does naturally fall in with the Jerusalem ministry, which is specially related by St. John. His connection with

the city, and residence in it, would certainly bring him into contact with the family at Bethany, and supply him with details which no other Evangelist would know. Knowing this incident himself, and knowing that the Synoptists had not recorded it, knowing too that it explained much that they did record, and was indeed the key without which the events of the last week could not be accounted for, he here, as elsewhere, adds to their narrative that which was lacking in it. It is one of the many instances in which the exact fitting of independent portions of the history prove that they are parts of one great whole.

The question of the authenticity of this record is, of course, implied in the often-asked question, "Why is it found only in St. John?" and behind this lies the wider question of the credibility of miracles. All that has been said in the *Introduction* on the Authenticity of the Gospel as a whole applies to this part of it; and there is no part of it which bears the impress of historical truth more fully than this does. The characters of Martha and Mary, the dialogues, the feelings of the Jews, the whole picture, are drawn to the life.

The silence of the record is itself significant. It is an inspired historian, and not a forger of the miraculous, in whose narrative Lazarus himself utters no word.

"Where wert thou, brother, those four days?"

There lives no record of reply,  
Which telling what it is to die  
Had surely added praise to praise.

\* \* \* \* \*

Behold a man raised up by Christ!  
The rest remaineth unreveal'd;  
He told it not; or something seal'd  
The lips of that Evangelist."

## EXCURSUS.

### EXCURSUS G: THE DAY OF THE CRUCIFIXION OF OUR LORD

[*For this Excursus, the Author of the Notes on the Synoptic Gospels in this series of Commentaries, Professor Plumptre, has been kind enough to make himself responsible.*] .

(1) The narratives of the first Three Gospels, and that of the Fourth, agree in the statement that on the night that immediately preceded the betrayal or the crucifixion of our Lord, He and His disciples met together at a supper. As to what that supper was they seem at first to differ. The first Three agree in speaking of it as the first day (Matthew and Mark), or the day (Luke), of the feast known as that of unleavened bread, the day when "the Passover must be slain" (Mark, Luke). The disciples ask where they are to prepare the Passover. They are sent to the owner of the upper room, where they are met with the message that their Lord purposes to eat the Passover there. When they arrived they "made ready the Passover" (Matthew, Mark, Luke). As they begin He tells them that He has eagerly desired to eat that Passover with them before He suffered (Luke xxii. 15). At a certain stage of the meal, which corresponded with the later ritual of the Paschal Supper, He commands them to see in the bread and the cup which He then blessed the memorial feasts of the New Covenant. The impression, *prima facie*, left by all the Three, is that our Lord and His disciples partook, at the usual time, of the Paschal Supper. In St. John, on the other hand, there is no record of the institution of this memorial feast. The supper is introduced as "before the feast of the Passover" (John xiii. 1). When

Judas leaves the room the other disciples think that he is sent to buy what was needed for the feast (John xiii. 29). When the priests are before Pilate they shrink from entering into the Prætorium, lest they should be defiled, and so be unable to eat the Passover (John xviii. 28). The impression, *prima facie*, left by St. John's Gospel is that our Lord's death coincided with the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb; that left by the Three is that the Paschal lamb had been sacrificed the previous evening.

(2) The difference has been regarded by many critics as altogether irreconcilable, and conclusions have been drawn from it unfavourable to the authority of one or both the narratives. Those who look on the Gospel of St. John as the work of a writer of the second century, see in this discrepancy a desire to give a sanction to the local usage of the Church of Ephesus, or to force upon his readers, as in his relation of "a bone of Him shall not be broken" (John xix. 36), the correspondence between the Passover and the death of Christ. Those who accept the Gospel as St. John's wholly or in part, see in his narrative a correction, designed or undesigned, of the narrative of the Three, and look on that narrative accordingly as more or less untrustworthy. Some even of those who shrink from these conclusions have been content to rest in the conviction that we have

no adequate *data* for the solution of the problem.

Some minor difficulties gather round the main question. It was not likely, it has been urged, that on the very night of the Passover the high priests should have taken the counsel and the action that led to the capture in Gethsemane; nor that on the day that followed, "a day of holy convocation" (Ex. xii. 16), they should have sat in judgment, and appeared as accusers before Pilate and Herod; nor that Simon of Cyrene should have come from the country (Mark xv. 21); nor that Judas should be supposed to have been sent, if it were the Paschal Supper, to make purchases of any kind—as if the shops in Jerusalem would on such a night be open (John xiii. 29).

The day of the Crucifixion is described by all four Evangelists as "the preparation," which it is assumed must mean "the preparation for the Passover." In St. John (xix. 14) it is definitely spoken of as "the preparation of the Passover."

(3) Some solutions of the problem, which rest on insufficient evidence, may be briefly noticed and dismissed. (a) It has been supposed that our Lord purposely anticipated the legal Paschal Supper, and that the words "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Luke xxii. 15), were an intimation of that purpose. Against this, however, there is the fact that the disciples, who could have no such anticipatory purpose, ask the question where they are to prepare, and then actually prepare the Passover as a thing of course, and that the Three Gospels, as we have seen, all speak of the Last Supper as being

actually on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, which is the Passover. (b) It has been conjectured that the Galilean usage as to the Passover may have varied from that of Judæa; but of this there is not the shadow of evidence, nor is it likely that the priests who had to take part in the slaying of the Paschal lambs would have acquiesced in what would seem to them a glaring violation of their ritual. (c) Stress has been laid on the fact that in the later ritual of the Passover week a solemn meal was eaten on the day that followed the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb, which was known as the *Chagigah* (= festivity, or festive meal). This also was a feast upon flesh that had been offered in sacrifice, and it has been thought by some who seek to reconcile the four narratives, that this was the feast for which Judas was supposed to be ordered to make provision, that this was "the Passover," the prospect of which led the high priests to keep clear of entering under the roof of the Praetorium. In many ways this seems, at first, an adequate solution of the difficulty, but there is no evidence that the term "the Passover," which had such a strictly definite significance, was ever extended to include this subordinate festivity.

(4) It remains to examine the narratives somewhat more closely, and with an effort to realise, as well as we can, the progress of the events which they narrate. As a preliminary stage in the inquiry, we may note two or three facts which cannot well be excluded from consideration. (a) The narrative of the first Three Gospels, probably independent of each other, represents, on any assumption, the wide-

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spread tradition of the churches of Judea, of Syria, and of Asia, of St. Matthew, St. Peter, and St. Paul. It is antecedently improbable that that tradition could have been wrong in so material a fact. (b) The Fourth Gospel, whether by St. John or a later writer, must, on any assumption, have been written when that tradition had obtained possession of well-nigh all the churches. It is antecedently improbable either that such a writer should contradict the tradition without knowing that he did so, or that, if he knew it, he should do so silently and without stating that his version of the facts was more accurate than that commonly received. It is at least a probable explanation of his omitting to narrate the institution of the Lord's Supper that the record of that institution was recited whenever the disciples met to break bread at Ephesus as elsewhere (1 Cor. xi. 23—26), and that he felt, therefore, that it was better to record what others had left untold than to repeat that with which men were already familiar. If he was not conscious of any contradiction, then his mode of narrating, simply and without emphasis noting facts as they occurred, was natural enough.

(5) It remains to be seen whether there is, after all, any real discrepancy. Let us picture to ourselves, assuming for a time that the Last Supper was the Paschal meal, what was passing in Jerusalem on the afternoon of that 14th of Nisan. The Passover lamb was, according to the law (Ex. xii. 6; Lev. xxiii. 5; Num. ix. 3, 5), to be slain "between the two evenings." The meaning of the formula is not certain. If, as some have supposed,

it meant between the evening of the 14th and that of the 15th of Nisan, it gives a space of twenty-four hours within which the lamb might be slain and eaten, and then the whole apparent contradiction between the two narratives disappears. It was open to the disciples to eat their Passover on the 14th of Nisan, to the priests to eat theirs on the 15th. The occurrence, however, of the same expression in the rules as to the daily evening sacrifice (Ex. xxix. 39, 41; Num. xxviii. 4) excludes this interpretation, and it seems more probable that it covered the period that preceded and followed the setting of the sun. (Comp. Deut. vi. 2.) Looking to the prominence given to the ninth hour (3 P.M.), by the connection with the evening sacrifice and prayer (Acts iii. 1), it would be probable enough that the slaughter of the Paschal lambs would begin at that hour, and this conclusion is expressly confirmed by Josephus, who states that they were slain from the ninth to the eleventh hour, i.e., from 3 to 5 P.M. (*Wars*, vi. 9, § 3). It is clear, however, that the process would take up the whole of that time, and would tend to stretch beyond it. Josephus (*ut supra*) reckons the number of lambs that had to be sacrificed at 270,000. Some were certain to begin their Paschal meal two hours before the others.

(6) Everything indicates that the disciples were among the earliest applicants for the priests' assistance. The Galileans abstained from work, as a rule, on the feast-day, more rigidly than the dwellers in Judaea, and this would naturally lead to their making their preparations early. Peter and John are, accordingly, sent to prepare "when

the day came." They get the room ready. They hasten, we may believe, to the Court of the Temple with the lamb. They sit down to their meal "at evening," i.e., about sunset, or 6 P.M. (Matt. xxvi. 20; Mark xiv. 27; Luke xxii. 14). It was in the nature of the case certain that the priests would be the last to leave the courts of the Temple, where they had to wait till the last lamb was offered, to burn the fat and offer incense, and cleanse the Temple, and purify themselves by immersion from the blood of the sacrifices, and that their Paschal meal would, therefore, be the latest at Jerusalem. They could scarcely expect in any case to eat their Passover before 9 or 10 P.M.

Now let us turn to the upper room, in which our Lord and the disciples were assembled. At a comparatively early stage of the meal, before the fourth, or possibly before the third of the four cups of wine which belonged to the ritual of the feast, Judas leaves to do his traitor's work. He has reason to believe that his Master will go out that evening, as was His wont, to Gethsemane. He goes at once to the priests, say about 8 or 9 P.M., with the welcome tidings. The urgency of the case, the sacred duty of checking the false and blasphemous Prophet who called Himself the Son of God, the urgency of the policy which sought to prevent the tumult which might have been caused by an arrest in the day-time, are all reasons for immediate action. *The Paschal meal is postponed.* They will be able, by-and-by, to comply with the rule that it must be consumed before the morning (Ex. xii. 10). The guards are summoned

and sent on their errand, as they had been once before on the "great day" of the Feast of Tabernacles (John vii. 37—45). Messages are despatched to call the members of the Sanhedrin (or, at least, a sufficient number for the purpose) to the hurried meeting, which was held before dawn. Assume these facts, and all runs smoothly. When Judas leaves, the disciples, looking forward to the usual festive *Chagigah* on the following day, the feast as distinct from the *Passover*, suppose that he is gone to prepare for that, and there is no ground for thinking that at that hour the markets would be shut, or that lambs, and bread, and wine might not be purchased, or, at least, ordered for the following day. When the priests, on the other hand, refused to enter into the Praetorium, "lest they should be defiled," it was because they, and they alone, perhaps, in all Jerusalem, had still to eat the Passover which others had eaten on the previous evening. Had their meal been due on the evening that followed the Crucifixion, their scruples would have been needless. They had but to wash and wait till sunset, and they would have been purified from all defilement. With them the case was more urgent. Probably even the pressure of hunger made them anxious to finish the untasted meal of the previous evening. It was then "early," say about 4 or 5 A.M. When Pilate gave his sentence it was "about the sixth hour," i.e., assuming St. John to use the Roman reckoning of the hours, 6 A.M. (But see John iv. 6, and xix. 14.) Then their work was done. As soon as they had left the matter in Pilate's hands they

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could eat their Passover, turning the supper into a breakfast. This they had time for while their Victim was being mocked by the Roman soldiers and led out to Calvary. When it was over, they were able to reappear between 9 A.M. and noon, and to bear their part in the mockings and blasphemies of the multitude (Matt. xxvii. 41; Mark xv. 31). The disciples, on the other hand, who had eaten their Passover, found nothing to hinder them (this is obviously true, at least, of the writer of the Fourth Gospel) from going into the Praetorium, hearing what passed between Pilate and his prisoner (John xviii. 33—40), and witnessing, it may be, the scourgings and the mockings. Joseph of Arimathea was not deterred by any fear of defilement from going to Pilate, for he too had, we must believe, eaten his Passover at the proper time (Matt. xxvii. 57).

(7) So far, then, on this view all is natural and consistent. St. John omits the fact of the meal being the Passover, as he omits the institution of the Lord's Supper, because these were things that were familiar to every catechumen, and confines himself to points of detail or of teaching which the current tradition passed over. He is not conscious that he differs from that tradition at all, and therefore neither emphasizes his difference, nor is careful to avoid the appearance of it. On the other hand, the assumption that the Passover followed the Crucifixion involves the almost incredible supposition that the chief priests could remain by the cross till 3 P.M., and then go to Pilate (John xix. 31) regardless of their previous scruples; that nearly the whole population of

Jerusalem, men and women, instead of cleansing their houses from leaven and preparing for the Passover, were crowding to the scene of the Crucifixion; that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea and the Maries were burying the body of Jesus, and so incurring, at the very hour of the Passover, or immediately before it, a ceremonial defilement which would have compelled them to postpone their Passover for another month (Num. ix. 10). They go, the first at least of them, to Pilate, and both the visits are, it will be noted, recorded by the same Evangelist who recorded the scruples of the priests, without any explanation of what, on the other theory, is the apparent inconsistency.

(8) There remain only a few minor points above noticed. And (a) as to the *Preparation*. Here the answer lies on the surface. That name (*Paraskevi*) was given to the day of the week, our Friday, the day before the Sabbath, and had absolutely nothing to do with any preparation for the Passover. The Gospels show this beyond the shadow of a doubt (Mark xv. 42; Matt. xxvii. 62; Luke xxiii. 54). If any confirmation were wanted, it may be found in the fact that the name is applied in a Graeco-Roman decree quoted by Josephus (*Ant.* xvi. 6, § 2) to the week-day which answers to our Friday. Even the phrase which seems most to suggest a different view, the "preparation of the Passover" in John xix. 14, does not mean more, on any strict interpretation, than the "Passover Friday," the Friday in the Passover week, and coming, therefore, before a Sabbath more solemn than others (John xix. 31). It may be noted further that the

term *Paraskeūè* was adopted by the Church, Western as well as Eastern, as a synonym for the *Dies Veneris*, or Friday. (b) The supposed difficulty as to Simon of Cyrene is of the slightest possible character. There is nothing to indicate that he was coming from field-labour. And if he had eaten his Passover on the previous day, either in Jerusalem or its immediate neighbourhood, there was nothing either in law or custom to prevent his entering the city on the following morning. (c) The questions connected with the action of the priests,

and the thoughts of the disciples as to the meaning of our Lord's command to Judas, have been already dealt with.

It remains, in submitting this explanation to the judgment of the thoughtful reader, that I should acknowledge my obligations to the exhaustive article on *PASSOVER* by the late Rev. S. Clark, M.A., in the *Dictionary of the Bible*, and to two articles on *THE LAST SUPPER OF THE LORD* in vols. viii. and ix. of the *Contemporary Review*, by the Rev. Professor Milligan, D.D., of Aberdeen.

#### EXCURSUS H: THE MEANING OF THE WORD “PARACLETE”

“A *Paraclete*, then, in the notion of the Scriptures, is an Intecessor.”—Bp. PEARSON.

In the Notes on chaps. xiv. 16 and 26, xv. 26, and xvi. 7, the word *Paraclete* (*παράκλητος*) has been rendered *Advocate* in preference to “*Comforter*,” which is the translation in the Authorised version. The object of this Excursus is to explain and justify this preference, for although the change is accepted by the majority of competent scholars, and the older rendering is probably destined to become obsolete, it, for the present, holds a place in the memory and feelings of English readers, from which it will not be removed unless a sufficient reason be shown.

The facts of the case are briefly as follows:—

(1) The word *παράκλητος* is a verbal adjective of passive signification, the simple meaning of which is “a person called to the side of another.” It acquired the sense of “an agent,” and the constant meaning in the classical writers is

“Advocate,” in the technical forensic sense. This latter word is of exactly the same formation, and expresses in Latin just what *Paraclete* expresses in Greek. No instance can be quoted in which *παράκλητος* is used by any classical writer in the sense of “*Comforter*.” It is quite beside the question to quote passages in which derivatives of the same root are used in this sense; the point is that *παράκλητος* acquired a definite technical meaning, and neither has nor can have any other meaning.

(2) The classical usage being thus undoubted, we have next to examine its meaning in Biblical Greek. It nowhere occurs in the LXX. translation of the Old Testament, though other derivatives of the same root are common. In Job. xvi. 2 (“miserable comforters are ye all”) the active form, *παρακλήτωρ*, is used, not the passive,

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*παράκλητος*. In the Greek of the New Testament it occurs only in this Gospel and in 1 John ii. 1, where it is rendered "Advocate." The phrase, "another Paraclete," in chap. xiv. 16, implies that Christ thought of Himself, as St. John in the Epistle speaks of Him, as a Paraclete; and no one can doubt that in these five passages the word has one and the same meaning. It can hardly be doubted, further, that the necessary meaning in the Epistle is "Advocate," and it will follow that the meaning of the word in the Greek of St. John is the same as that in the Greek of the classical authors.

(3) That the meaning of "Advocate" was attached to the word in the Greek of the first and second Christian centuries may be seen from the following passages:—

"For it was indispensable that the man who was consecrated to the Father of the world should have as a paraclete His Son, the being most perfect in all virtue, to procure forgiveness of sins and a supply of unlimited blessings" (Philo, *Vit. Mos.* iii. 14; Bohn's Trans., vol. iii. p. 102). The student of Philo will find the word used in the same sense in *de Josepho*, § 40, and in *Flaccum*, §§ 3 and 5. These references are of special value from the fact that Philo was, like St. John, a Jew by birth and culture, who became later in life a student of the Greek language and literature. (Comp. *Excursus A*, § 3.)

"Who will be our advocate if our deeds are found not to be holy and upright?" (Clem. Rom., cap. 6.)

"Advocates of the rich, unjust judges of the poor, sinners in all things." (Ep. of Barnabas. cap.

xx., speaking of those who walk in "the path of darkness;" Hoole's Trans., p. 101.)

(4) It is true that many Greek Fathers take *παράκλητος*, both in the Gospel and the Epistle, in the active sense. "He is called Paraclete," says Cyril of Jerusalem, "because He comforts, and consoles, and helps our weakness." (*Catech.* xvi. 20.) How this error arose—for that an error it is all analogy of words of like form goes to show—it is not difficult to see. The word *παράκλητος* occurs only five times in the New, and nowhere in the Old Testament. The cognate active forms, meaning "comfort," "exhort," "console," occur frequently in the LXX. and considerably more than 100 times in the New Testament. Read, e.g., 2 Cor. i. 1—7. The ordinary sense, then, overrode the technical meaning of one form of the word, and the idea of advocacy was lost in that of comfort.

(5) The Vulgate reads in the Gospel *Paracletus*, or *Paraclitus*, and *Advocatus* in the Epistle; but the old Latin originally had *Advocatus* throughout. (Comp. Tertullian *adv. Prax.* cap. ix.; *De Monog.* cap. iii.)

(6) These facts taken together have convinced most scholars who have investigated the question, that "Comforter" cannot be regarded as a tenable rendering of the Greek word *παράκλητος*, and the conviction is one which seems to be extending among English scholars. But here, as in other cases which we have met in the study of St. John, the attention of scholars has been directed too exclusively to the meaning of the Greek word. It is important to bear in mind that the author is, like Philo, a Jew writing

Greek, and in this fact we shall, it is believed, find the true key to the sense in which he used the word. The Hebrews had, in their contact with other nations, borrowed many words from them, and it necessarily followed from the conquests of Greece and Rome that the Greek and Latin military and legal terms were well known to them. Now παράκλητος was, as we have seen above, a technical legal term, and it was literally taken over into the later Hebrew and written *Peraklit*, or, in the definite form, *Peraklita*. It means, when thus taken over, "Advocate," and a careful examination of the Talmudic passages, quoted in Buxtorf and Levy, leaves the impression that it has no other meaning. The opposite Greek word, κατήγορος (*Katēgoros*, accuser) was adopted in the same way. Like παράκλητος, it was clipped of its termination, and was written *Katēgor*, or *Kattegora*. That this word κατήγορος was used in Palestine in the first century we know from Acts xxiii. 30, 35; xxiv. 8, 16, 18; and from the interpolated passage, John viii. 10. In all these cases the full Greek word is used. But St. John himself has occasion to speak of an "accuser of the brethren" (Rev. xii. 10), and what word does he use? He actually writes in Greek the clipped Hebrew form *Kattēgor*, a word which is wholly unknown to the Greek language, and which was so strange to copyists that they altered it, and wrote the fuller form. The Gospel and the Epistle tell us then of a Paraclete ever present with the believer, and of a Paraclete who is with the Father; the Apocalypse tells of the "*Kattēgor* of the brethren." With this contrast in his mind, let the reader turn to such a passage

as the following, taken from the Mishna, "Rabbi Elias ben Jacob saith, 'He that keepeth one commandment obtains for himself one *Peraklit*, but he who committeth one sin obtains for himself one *Kattēgor*'" (*Pirke Aboth*, iv. 11); or the following, "If a man have distinguished *Peraklits*, he is snatched from death" (*Schab.* fol. 32, 1); and it will be hardly necessary to produce further proof that Advocate is the true meaning of the word Paraclete. Two other important facts bearing upon the meaning of this word in the later Hebrew and Syriac languages, may, however, be noted:—

(a) The word *Peraklita* is twice used in the Targum on Job, viz., in xvi. 20, where the Targum reads, "My *Peraklits* are my friends" (Hebr. "My mockers are my friends;" or, "My friends scorn me," Auth. vers.), and in xxxiii. 23, where it reads, "An angel as Paraclete," where the Hebrew is probably, "An angel as mediator;" Auth. vers., "A messenger with him, an interpreter." It is significant that *Peraklita* is not used in the Targum of Job xvi. 2 (see above, § 2), though it almost certainly would have been had it meant "Comforter," for it was at hand, and occurs in the very same chapter.

(b) The word *Peraklita* is used in each of the passages in this Gospel, and also in the passage in the Epistle in the Peshito-Syriac translation. This fact means that the word was in the second century incorporated in the cognate Syriac language, and that if it be taken to mean Advocate in the Epistle it must be so taken in the Gospel also. The same version also renders *Katēgor* in Rev. xii. 10 by a derivative of the Greek word.

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(7) It is believed that enough has now been said to justify the rendering in the Notes, and to show that "Comforter" cannot be retained as a translation of *παράκλητος*, at any rate in the modern sense of the word. It may be questioned, however, whether our translators did not include the sense of "Advocate" in the word "Comforter" (Low Lat., *Confortare*; Old Fr., *Conforter*), which originally meant "strengthener," "supporter." The older meaning of the word will be at once seen in the following passages from Wyclif's version:—

"And he *counfertide* hym with nailes that it shulde not be moued" (Isa. xli. 7;—A.V., "fastened").

"And an aungel apperde to him fro hevene and *counfertide* him" (Luke xxii. 43;—A.V., "strengthening him").

"And whanne he hadde take mete he was *counfertid*" (Acts ix. 19;—A.V., "he was strengthened").

"Do ghe manli and be ghe *counfertid* in the Lord" (1 Cor. xvi. 13;—A.V., "Quit you like men, be strong <sup>v</sup>").

"I mai alle thingis in him that *counfertith* me" (Phil. iv. 13;—A.V., "that strengtheneth me").

This sense is not uncommon in Elizabethan English. Thus Hooker e.g., says, "The evidence of God's own testimony, added unto the natural assent of reason, concerning the certainty of them, doth not a little comfort and confirm the same" (*Eccles. Pol.*, Book i.); and again,—

"The very prayer of Christ ob-

tained angels to be sent Him as *comforters* in His agony" (*Ibid.*, Bk. v. § 48).

The truth that the Holy Ghost is the Comforter is independent of this translation, and is, indeed, more fully established by the rendering Advocate. The comfort which comes from His presence is not simply that of consolation in sorrow, but that of counsel, guidance, pleading with God, conviction of the world. He is to abide in the disciples for ever, and teach them all things (chap. xiv. 16, 17, 26); to witness with them of Christ (chap. xv. 26); to convict the world of sin, righteousness, judgment; to guide the disciples into all truth (chap. xvi. 7—13); to make intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered (Rom. viii. 26), as Christ Himself had done (chap. xvii.), and as the great High Priest ever liveth to do (Heb. vii. 25). He is "another Advocate," to be to believers in all time what Christ was to the first disciples, to be in men an Advocate on earth as Christ is for men an Advocate with the Father (1 John ii. 1).

[Comp. Lightfoot *On a Fresh Revision of the New Testament*, pp. 50—55; Trench *On the Authorised Version*, p. 23; and especially Hare, *Mission of the Comforter*, Noto K, p. 309, Ed. 3; and Pearson, *On the Creed*, p. 329, Note. The student will find references to the Rabbinical writings and Targums in Schöttgen, vol. i., p. 1119, and Buxtorf's and Levy's lexicons under the words *Peraklit* (*a*), *Kattēgor* (*a*), and *Sannigor*.]

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*"GOD, who as at this time didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people, by the sending to them the light of Thy Holy Spirit; Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with Thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen."*—COLLECT FOR WHIT-SUNDAY.

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